Ireland and Brazil:
A Cultural Dialogue

Edited by Laura P. Z. Izarra & Mariana Bolfarine

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Travels of an Irish Artist in Latin America

Rita Duffy

Photos: personal archive

Iomramh is an Irish word for a visionary voyage, the epic quest or travel of the imagination. These ancient journeys were very much part of Ireland's monastic tradition, when monks felt the calling: they needed gather themselves and to head out into the unknown. We have the stories of journeys like St. Brendan's Voyage and Maeldúin's, among others, epic adventures and reported tales of strange and mystical experiences. My own journey to Latin America, whilst not

of the same scale or boldness, certainly echoed something of that *Iomramh* tradition. My Latin American adventure had its beginning in the Alliance of Chairs of Irish Studies in Latin America (UNAM, USP and UNLPam), and a host of Irish Embassy people who did everything to open the doors and assist my insatiable curiosity. My travels in Mexico, Brazil and Argentina will engender new plans, new collaborations and new artworks, from the inspiration that has always emerged from such journeys.

And up I Flew – to Mexico

The flight from Boston to Mexico was long and thankfully uneventful. I slept on and off and rummaged in the seat pocket in front where I found a fold out card with a blue ribbon on the front. It was not the familiar list of safety instructions but additional information on a more discreet emergency, human trafficking is big North-South business. A series of line drawings cut through the difficulties of language, and I began my journey to Latin America 'reading' the 'tableau style' image, a catalogue of human behaviour to look out for clear visual signs of a distressed woman being coerced for the financial benefit of others and the numerous individuals willing to pay. Visually, the simplified drawings reminded me of the ***1641 Depositions*** held at Trinity College Dublin, basic images depicting horrific war stories. I slipped the laminated brochure back into the seat pocket and wondered if anyone passing through a busy airport would ever report seeing anything. I felt a tinge of despair that in 2024 international slavery and its supply and demand continuum remains part of the human experience.

I wasn't sure what I was seeing through the window of the embassy car that evening, as it circled and broke away from the constant swirl of downtown traffic towards the hotel. Two dark horses caught mid-gallop, rearing-up in the water lit fountain, a *jinete* [horseman] between them holding onto their wet manes. A 'hold your horses' passionate moment held static forever in the traffic island pool. Waking the next morning I pulled the curtains on a spectacular view of Mexico City, a vast splendid place that spilled way out towards a haze of distant mountains. Appreciative of my privileged view I took time to look. My gaze wandered across the intricate city tapestry, the details of architecture and colour giving way to sensation, emotion and imaginings. My eyes fixed on a mid-distance detail, an electronic wall mural flicking an occasional image of Frida Kahlo, playfully winking her surreal hello and welcome.

I had arrived in Mexico City just in time to be swept up in the enthusiasm and hope: for the first time in over 200 years of Mexico's independent history, the first female president Claudia Sheinbaum was about to be inaugurated. I borrowed a bicycle and pedalled my way into the huge throng of people slowly making their way to Mexico City's colonial-era main plaza. It was spectacular, a glorious day to be in Mexico and every imaginable variation of 'Mexican' was present. I imagined even faint echoes of Aztec ghosts could be heard under foot in the ancient plaza. Street vendors sold snacks, babies were fed as mothers sold handicrafts, a man wore multiple hats and *señoritas* without bicycles danced in the street. It was a carnival of every imaginable confection, a visual feast that was unmistakably Mexican. The breeze took a giant Mexican flag dancing on the air to the sound of opera music and my heart soared with the emotion of it all. One woman, carrying the hopes of thousands here in the main square chanting 'Claudia.' Will she be able to combat high rates of violence against women in the country? What would Frida have made of her? 'We have always been governed by men, and they think we're incapable, but we're not. We are the head of our families.'

A ceremony involving an all-women committee of Mexico's approximately 70 Indigenous groups blessed and brushed the new President with herbs and incense: 'You are a voice for all of us who had no voice for a long time.' I don't know if it was the opera music or the poetic movement of a flag the size of several king size bedspreads, but I was swept up in the pure human emotion wanting so much to

Claudia Sheinbaum receives tribute from Mexican women at her inauguration. Photos: personal archive.

believe that everything in that huge collective moment was possible. Claudia made a list of promises, any mention of the drug cartels that fight to control lucrative smuggling routes for drugs, migrants or guns was brief and near the end of the list.

> The culture and visual art of Mexico has occupied a special place in my imagination for a long time, having an opportunity to visit Mexico reinvigorated those early inspirations.

Wandering the corridors of José Clemente Orozco's murals was a particularly special moment as I had only ever seen these before in books and it is always special to see artworks in the full glory of where they were made and continue to exist. The small theatre with murals by Diego Rivera and the venue where Frida Kahlo first met him (at San Ildefonso College) is special because of their love story,

of her life and work. It is similar to James Joyce's legacy in Dublin, and one wonders what they would have thought of their faces on everything from teacups to shopping bags. I couldn't help but think of my early experiences of the Belfast mural tradition and the hard narrow political thinking that made me turn away from painting on public walls. I found my voice in challenging the violent patriarchal politics threatening to engulf me and chose to use whatever skills I had navigating my own path through violent social upheaval towards feminism and artistic freedom.

Magic realism has been a constant in my painting and resides deep in both Irish and Mexican culture; the shared and lived visual experience is set in contrast by the hot bursting colour of Mexico and the pale cool dampness of Ireland.

Introduction

I remember the seismic moment discovering Frida Kahlo while I was at art school in Belfast, her work had a profound effect at a crucial moment in my development as an artist, she convinced me it was possible. Kahlo's work gave me the confidence to peruse my interest in figurative painting when everything around me seemed focused on a sleek new 'lens based' artworks, painting was considered somehow antiquated and perhaps over. Photography did have an immediacy that captured much of the madness of a troubled Belfast but as an artist living there I needed more. I continued my solitary exploration, making drawings fusing the strange mix of what I witnessed going on around me and the systemic social change emerging beyond the confines of a British art school in troubled Belfast. I made self-portraits and explored issues of identity, class, and colonialism, firmly committed to making work in my own time and place, rooted to where I found my cultural and political beginning.

Frida Kahlo gave me permission when it was essential, bringing together the autobiographical and political elements in my work and she pointed me towards surrealism.

I was fascinated by Mexico's street culture and catalogued photographically what I saw, a haunted ball gown waltzing silently

Photo by Rita Duffy

Creation, *by Diego Rivera (1922-23)*
Photo by Rita Duffy

out onto the street and the shrines around every corner. In Ireland their equivalent is found only in rural places, holy wells and rag trees where they maintain their magic with living interactions of ribbons, beads and various confections. There is a fascinating similarity in the folk traditions of Ireland and Mexico, in symbolism, and primarily in female and magical devotion.

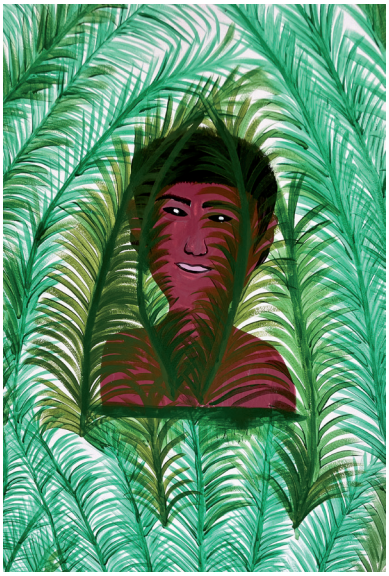
My sensations of a shrine I saw on my walks and stopped to see and feel it in all its details. Paper flowers offer their colour up to the sunshine, fading as the clock ticks us by. The fairytale of a blue, magic statue in a smooth glass box shows a residue of religious belief, humming under desire and passion and colour. Everyday shrines are built in careful arrangement of materials, aspiration and belief, filled with domestic textures: the all sacred gatherings of random beauty weaving a spell.

In my fondest dreams I am standing in lush greenness of a Mexican garden, huge terracotta pots brimming with exotic succulents, sunlight throwing shadows on the bluest of walls – the studio door is open, and I have a whole year to make new paintings. It could only be magnificent to establish an ongoing artist exchange/ residency between Mexico and Ireland, encouraging further visual culture exploration and collaboration.

'Indígena não é fantasia' – Onwards to Brazil

A flight from Mexico City to São Paulo,
a thousand-mile patchwork
of orange dots where the Amazon burns
- Orbital, electronic music duo

It's not possible for me to fly over the Amazon without thinking about Roger Casement and his heroic journeys exposing the brutal realities of colonialism. Behind all the tinselled brocade, spangled buttons and royal honours, humans frequently tried to hide the grubby



practices of empire. En route from airport to the hotel, window wipers wave a metronome beat and rubber blades push beads of water off the screen. The past seems entangled with the present and it's hard to comprehend life back then on a rubber plantation, where profit was all that mattered. And I wonder what Roger Casement might think about the global retail giant *Amazon*, founded by American business magnate Jeffrey Preston Bezos, and conditions of the workforce experience in his multibillion producing warehouses.

I am curious to see where I am so that I continue to gaze out caught in a revolving river of wheels, trucks, cars and headlights, surging forward into the massive sprawling city that is São Paulo. Advertising billboards offer strip mall shopping and brightly lit commerce; petrol stations and random trees fly past while lights reflect and dazzle in the wetness. It's much like any car journey into any

city from an airport, but gradually, it takes on its own unique São Paulo personality. I see small groupings of favela dwellings, improvised homes stacked on an incline away from the road. Tin and wood board, dishevelled makeshift homes with tilting roofs offering precarious shelter. Haphazard and necessary, they make housing in Ireland look solid and prosperous. I'm reminded how catastrophic consumption threatens our planet and very aware of my considerable air travel. I'm glad I packed light; I probably won't need the half of it anyway.

First stop at the *Entanglement* exhibition; fabulous blue, they are doing the installation. The following stops: two "shrine building" workshops, at a high school and at MAC, the Museum of Contemporary Art in front of the beautiful Ibirapuera Park.

Museu das Culturas Indígenas

We visited a museum dedicated to the Guarani, in an effort to learn more about the culture of people we would meet on our jungle visit in a couple of days. In the museum courtyard were several stalls selling a range of hand-crafted items. Each beaded necklace, each carved wooden animal or decorated gourd made by hand, is an effort towards human dignity.

I want to be supportive, then I'm hit by a blizzard of thoughts: what do I want, what can I afford, what can I carry, what is the value, what if anything do I need? We wander towards the museum entrance. An older woman smiles at me, and I notice her tattoo, a silvery black Guarani pattern covers her entire forearm. What's it about? I indicate curiosity. She begins to explain, 'I am fully present listening to the translation. I'am protected; the ancestors are watching over me.' I ask to photograph, she agrees and lifts her arm for closer inspection. I hold her hand and use my iPhone to make a record of the exchange. Our technology captures the exchange in the momentary press of a button, and I'm left thinking how perfectly wise and simple the Guarani marks on her skin are, constant, reassuring, recharging each generation without the extreme consumption of electricity. We, all of us, want to feel protected. The unique patterns of short angular lines make me think of fish skeletons and this visual language of marks connect me to a memory of a young Guarani boy I had met a few years ago.

Ireland and Brazil: a cultural dialogue

He appeared in front of me at a cafe table and stood with small carved wooden animals sprouting from between his fingers. An assortment of jungle animals; anteaters, spotted cats and lemurs all fashioned in wood and decorated in tiny burnt-in patterns. They are beautiful, made by forest dwellers and traded to tourists by an eight-year old called Ricardo, too young to be out wandering dark streets, too young to be shooed away and very excited to see his image on the screen of my iPhone.

The museum is a treasure trove of art and culture, I want to know every detail of every ritual and I understand it overlaps with Celtic mythology. The stories of St Brigid, 'earth mother - ancient spirit,' the protector of nature, ancestral guardian, provider and healer, an environmental warrior perhaps for our time. Considered uniquely untouched by modern civilisation is one vast culture that has lived in and protected the area for centuries. The Guarani people are the indigenous population native to Argentina, Paraguay, Brazil, and parts of Bolivia and Uruguay. The Guarani people suffered under the Spanish and Portuguese invasion during the seventeenth century and were subjugated to slavery and religious conversion. After the expulsion of the missions in the early nineteenth century, the Guarani focused on creating their own strong community. Modern Guarani culture still carries ancient traditions, some that have been shared throughout South America. One widespread Guarani influence is yerba mate - tea drinking.

I think of Brigid as an Amazonian warrior and want to know more about Guarani women and their stories. The possibility of generating an artistic collaboration presents itself: an aesthetic elaboration that brings together the warp and weft of two ancient cultures, respectfully exploring and learning sustainable values in which the 'answer to the question of who will be dominated and tamed, is no one.' The following

day, we set off early for our visit to Kalipety, a Guarani settlement on the outskirts of São Paulo. Good roads give way to red dirt tracks and local election flyers litter the ditches. We are made very welcome, and everything takes on a different energy when we experience the fire and ritual song in the *Opy'I a*—the prayer house. 'Somos escudos humanos para manter nossos saberes vivos' ['We are human shields to keep our knowledge alive'].

It was a privilege to visit this community, and we were shown around one of the gardens, with plants to eat, plants to heal and plants to make colour. Great respect and true veneration are given to nature; they know all life depends on this relationship. They practise agroforestry. We are invited to lunch and so much is received and appreciated with very few words. I made portraits with a young Guarani artist and felt sure with the evident multiple skills we could build a great collaborative project.

There is something overtly passionate about São Paulo, the sunshine, the sounds, the sense of ferocious nature being held at bay.

I stopped in the street one day to look at a huge tree, dripping with jungle vines that extended onto the tarmac; its girth was the width of a car. A magisterial tree surrounded by human bustle and all the while its silent roots forcing their way up through pavement, breaking the road. Standing there I had the feeling that if the *paulistanos* [people from São Paulo] took a day off, the jungle would surely leap forward and reclaim the territory.

Entanglement **Exhibition at Centro Universitário MariAntonia**

An exhibition of my work, curated by Laura Izarra, opened as a pre-cultural event of the XIX Symposium of Irish Studies in South America and was on till the end of January 2025. I was so pleased to see how well it all looked on the wonderful azure, blue walls.

The inclusion of 'Anatomy of Hope,' an animation inspired by the sensibilities of St. Brigid, seemed a perfect premonition of what I found on my journey. Everything was meticulously planned and painstakingly put in place by Laura and the university team; I am so grateful for all their hard work. I really wish I could have stayed longer but I am truly grateful to view the *Secrets of Putamayo* with the film's director, Aurélio Michiles.

Other Museums

The Afro-Brazilian Museum [*Museu Afro Brasil*] was a fabulous experience of 'more can never be enough' accompanied by Iuri Gomes, who patiently explained and brought it all to life. I'm more convinced than ever that survival after enslavement and colonial oppression is a shared human experience evident the world over. The challenge has always been in how we choose to collectively resist, celebrate and thrive.

MASP museum, a huge downtown gallery which has no walls! Their collection of fabulous paintings floats in rows on 'crystal easels,' as they are described in the information text. Heavy concrete blocks support reinforced glass panels and the paintings are bolted securely through the glass. I've never seen a gallery hanging like this. An early Rembrandt self-portrait catches my eye; immediately, I want to see what the back of the painting looks like. This is perhaps something only a painter can truly appreciate, it seems terribly intimate. I walk methodically through the aisles of paintings; Cezanne, Picasso, Bosch,

Photo by Rita Duffy

Tintoretto, Van Gogh and many more. I see only the wooden stretcher bars backing the canvases, horizontal and vertical.

I've never experienced such a sense of materiality in visual art, it's a wonderful forest of skeletal timber and uniquely crafted, ageless paintings.

Walking the Main Street of São Paulo on a traffic free day is a unique experience; people spill out across the huge avenue and music belts out of every corner – it is raucous, teeming, and hot. Street traders display their goods: semi-precious stones, sun hats, feather jewellery, macramé bracelets and all manner of homespun crafts. Then, as if in some surreal tale, the ground opens with the heavy metal lid of a storm drain shifting, the pavement erupts. A tall man with a dark beard emerges, hoisting himself up onto the street. He places two plastic shopping bags up on one side and finds his feet, quickly gathering his possessions. It's obvious he lives 'down there,' no one reacts and the subterranean dweller blends into the ambling crowd, like water colour paint dispersing in water, bleeding into the mass of São Paulo humanity on the move.

Argentina Is a Love Story

Buenos Aries is a city styled on Paris, with beautiful architecture, tree lined streets that feel stylish and grand, beneath the surface there is a frantic scramble for survival going on. President Javier Milei, known by the nickname 'El Loco,' or 'The Crazy One,' has slashed the number of government ministries by almost half and has proposed eliminating the Central Bank. He opposes abortion and mandatory vaccination, is sceptical of climate change, and supports drug legalisation and deregulation of firearm ownership.

I was not surprised when I arrived in Argentina to hear there was a nationwide university strike. Hundreds of thousands of students

protested and classes were held outside university buildings. An illustrated lecture was planned for a small group of students at Facultad de Humanidades y Ciencias de la Educación, Universidad Nacional de La Plata. The audio-visual equipment was so antiquated that we resorted to looking at images on my computer. We explored freely our ideas, opinions, and talked about our shared concerns. This type of exchange has always been fostered in universities, the students were fully engaged, and I believe it turned out very well. These eager young people are attending university in a building complex that was formerly a detention camp. The army billet remains at the entrance gate and traces of former menace still lurk in the architecture. Stopping to buy a lunch snack from a fundraiser stall I noticed a memorial plaque bedded into the wall, an unmistakable list of names and dates, staff and students who were 'disappeared' in previous decades. It is a sharp reminder of a previous dictatorship and the potential of government gone wrong. There are, I was told, gaps on the wall plaque to engrave additional names of those whose bodies have not yet been recovered.

I leave Buenos Aries and fly up to Santa Rosa, La Pampa. This is beef cattle flat grassland, and it looks impossible to rear anything in such dry terrain. We drive for miles and the big open sky is backdrop to brief views of huge birds that swoop into view and are gone. It is hot and dry, and I'm told spring has hardly begun. I don't want to imagine how it feels in the summer and find it hard to comprehend how anything can survive in this vast arid landscape with no water.

We set out on a road trip to Victorica, a small town four hours away, three women and a whole bright Saturday to explore. The roadside shrines are absolutely fascinating. It should not be too surprising when I tell you I had a miraculous moment, looking towards the sun in the vast open sky and that particular striped cloud formation – I realised where the inspiration for the Argentine flag came from.

Fascinated by roadside shrines, we stopped occasionally, I gathered photographs and tried to remember the various stories and beliefs that go with each one. La Difunta Correa [the deseaced Correa] is a special figure in folk-religion that inspires great devotion across Argentina; miracles are said to have occurred at her shrine. According to popular legend, the husband of Deolinda Correa was forcibly recruited during the Argentine civil wars. When he became sick, Deolinda took her baby and followed tracks through the desert to find him; when her supplies ran out, she died. Gauchos found her body and were astonished when they saw the dead woman's baby was still alive, feeding from her 'miraculously' ever-full breast.

Roadside shrines to Difunta Correa were first set up by cattle herders and truck drivers. I found these installations surreal with the small sculptures of the mother and baby and scatterings of plastic bottles of water 'to calm her eternal thirst.' I have a particular interest in shrines across Ireland and the aesthetics of folk culture.

Throughout my journey in Latin America I photographed Mexican shrines, held workshops in Brazil building shrines with students and visited the fabulous rural roadside shrines in Argentina.

Arriving in Victorica, we have an invite to meet the mayor and thankfully his office was well shaded and cool. A descendant of an Irish migrant tells a very long story of hardship and resilience, the names and details unwind across oceans into 'new territory,' linking the lives of people from Ireland and Argentina forever. An epic tale of tenacity and determination spills forth across decades sparing no

detail. I struggle to understand the patchy translation as we wilt in the heat. An ambitious man with enough money to buy a parcel of land in Argentina for his son, a love story with a Mapuche Indian woman that is never going to end well, and Father Fahy selecting and sending over a more suitable wife. Colonialism is definitely a patriarchal concept.

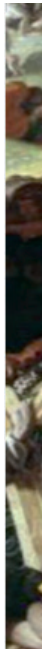
Stepping out of the mayor's office we visit the town's monument to the 'desert campaign' that cleared the land of its indigenous people and sold it to those willing and able to purchase it. In more recent times additions to the town square have included an artwork that represents the 'other narrative' and tells of a brave indigenous man described as a wily fox, who made their conquest as difficult as possible.

We travelled on to visit the Rankül community Rosa Moreno Mariqueo and talk with the head of the community (*Lonko*) María Isabel Serraino, a descendant of the indigenous peoples who lived in this landscape before any new settlers arrived. She works hard to keep alive the knowledge of her ancestors and holds workshops to teach her community about herbal medicine and traditions. A collection of arrowheads found on the land is framed and there were fascinating displays of old tools. Recovering language and culture disrupted by colonialism is a difficult journey but somehow, by just being herself, she keeps going. She tells me her brother died during the COVID-19 pandemics and was buried in the old-fashioned way, wrapped in

animal pelt with his feathered headband and poncho. It's not just artefacts and nostalgia, María Isabel has an approach to the world that is ancient and wise, and gradually I feel a familiar energy that has reoccurred throughout my South America travels. As we leave, a strange, mysterious event happens. I look out of the car window at the huge pile of scorched white bones and consider all the stories I've listened to that day. Then suddenly a magnificent owl appears right in front of me, opening wide its wings. I catch every movement, descending gracefully into this human realm and landing squarely in front of me. And for a fleeting moment as it stares at me, I understand the unsettling power of this magisterial otherworldly creature.

October to November 2024

1. HISTORY



A Brief History of the Irish Diaspora in Brazil[1]

Laura P. Z. Izarra

The marriage of Strongbow and Aoife, by Daniel Maclise. Oil on canvas, National Gallery of Ireland, Dublin. (Photo: Public Domain)

The arrival of Cambro-Norman mercenaries under the control of Richard de Clare, known as Strongbow, in the mid-twelfth century, marked the beginning of more than seven hundred years of English – and later British – rule over Ireland, which became the 'laboratory of empire'. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Ireland underwent rapid changes in society, marked both by the Crown's policy of plantation, a system of colonial domination which provoked

the displacement and dispossession of Catholic Irish landowners and the 'plantation' of people – the English colonizers. The oppression of the monarchy alienated the agrarian and military classes of the Old Irish and Anglo-Irish, leading to a large-scale emigration, firstly due to wars: in 1580, the intervention of Catholic Europe supported the Earl of Desmond's rebellion; and, in 1593-1601, the Nine Years' War marked the resistance against the English expansion of its domain. Secondly, due to crop failures and famines (1585–7, 1600–3 and 1621–3). A large group of military men emigrated to join the armies of Europe, especially those from Flanders (in the region of France) and Spain. The group, called the 'Wild Geese', also consisted of Irish and Anglo-Irish nobility who had escaped oppression by the English and Protestants, precipitating the collapse of Gaelic resistance to English rule in Ireland.

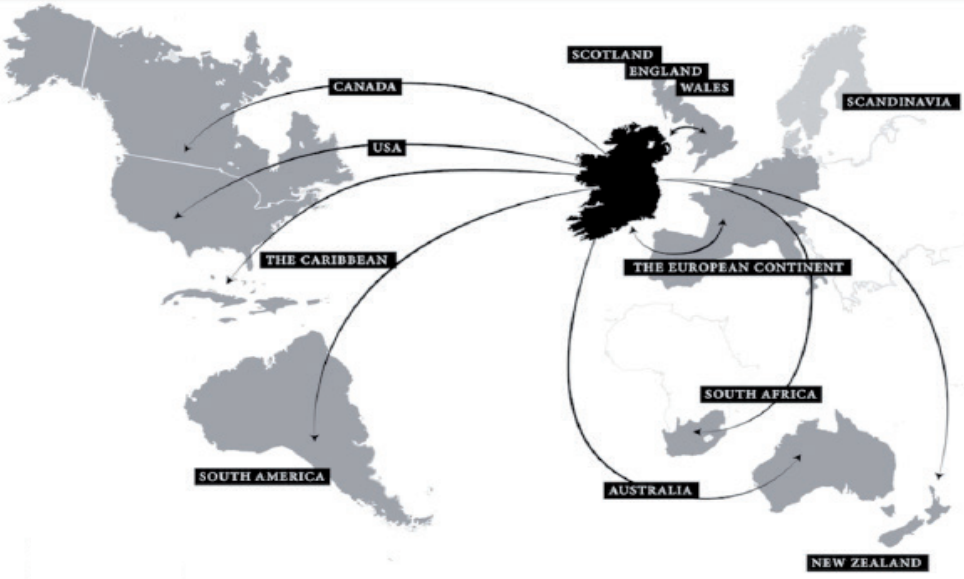
In the following centuries, another way to escape oppression and subordination in Ireland was to join the military career to serve in the overseas colonies of the British Empire in America and Asia. Administrative positions in the Civil Service or in command of battalions formed in the service of the Crown were the only possible means of upward social mobility at the time. At the end of the eighteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth century, especially during the Great Famine (1832-1849) in Ireland, there was a steady rise in Irish emigration. One third of the population died because of a fungus that affected the potato crops in Europe, which was the staple diet for the Irish to survive. Another third of the Irish emigrated to English-speaking countries, a language imposed on the Irish through the Penal Laws[2]. Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and especially the United States were the destinations that received the largest number of immigrants.

The census shows that 80% crossed the Atlantic after the Great Famine between 1851 and 1860, when almost a million people entered the latter country (about 35% of the total volume of immigration) and another 665,842 between 1881 and 1890. However, for various reasons, some emigrated to South America and were mistakenly identified by their language as belonging to a single community: the English.

Reproduction:
National Museum of Ireland

THINKING FURTHER

What is the difference in meaning of the following words: diaspora, emigration, immigration, and exile?



Paths of Irish Migration
Credits: A letter from Ireland

Were there waves of migration to South America?

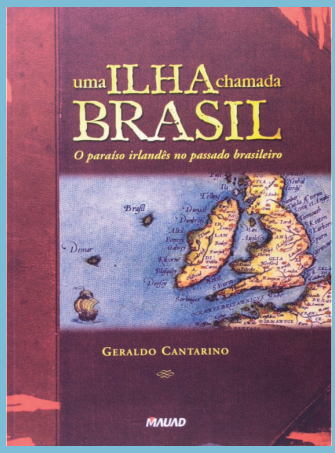
The first Irish emigrants *imagined* South America as a geographical space where the *reinvention* of their hopes for freedom and better economic and social status was possible, though they would have to face a foreign language and culture. The land 'across the sea' caught the attention of those suffering the effects of the Great Famine in Ireland in the mid-nineteenth century, and a smaller number of Irish headed to South America inspired by travel accounts and letters from those who settled there. Argentina and Brazil were destinations where nature offered the Irish the agricultural and mineral wealth denied to them by the oppression and dispossession they suffered in their homeland under British colonial rule.

Brazil has always been on the route of the southern seas. After being isolated by the Portuguese for almost three centuries, Brazilian ports were opened to friendly nations in 1808, making it a geographical space that exerted great attraction in the global context of the history

of displacements. 'Giant by its very nature' (National Anthem) and by the character of its people, the image of its natural riches, unity and security has for centuries fuelled the imagination of foreigners coming from various corners of the world to fulfill their utopias in these tropical lands.[3]

Did you know the origin of the name Brazil?

Medieval writings consecrated a powerful myth in the history of great navigations, "the so-called Fortunate Islands or Blessed Islands, a blessed place, where eternal spring and eternal youth reign, and where men and animals live together in peace", according to Phoenician and Irish traditions. Braaz, as the Phoenicians called it, or Hy Brazil, as the Irish monks called it on a symbolic level, appears on maps of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries as an island divided by a large river, ***Insulla de Brazil or Isola de Brazil,*** to the west of Ireland and south of the Azores. The ancient legend of Hy Brazil was incorporated into the folkloric memory of the Irish people.



In *Uma Ilha Chamada Brasil* [*An Island Called Brazil*], Geraldo Cantarino includes several Irish poets of the time who reinvented this imaginary by mystifying Hy Brasil, the land beyond the sea, through its melodious birds with golden wings, leafy trees and the sacredness of all its nature, an original Garden of Eden.

https://revistas.usp.br/abei/article/view/184277

1. Map of the Atlantic Ocean and North America and Europe (1594), anon. (British Library). In Cantarino (2004), p. 224.
2. Abraham Ortelius' map of Europe from 1595 shows the island. Image credit: Abraham Ortelius/Public Domain.

I-Breasil (1906)

Ethna Carbery

There is a way I am fain to go

To the mystical land where all are young,

Where the silver branches have buds of snow.

And every leaf is a singing tongue.

(. . .)

The sacred trees stand in rainbow dew,

Apple and ash and the twisted thorn,

Quicken and holly and dusky yew,

Ancient ere ever gray Time was born

(. . .)

A blossom of fire is each beauteous bird, Scarlet and gold on melodious wings,

And never so haunting a strain was heard

From royal harp in the Hall of Kings.

(. . .)

There were different waves of emigration to the South American countries. In the sixteenth century, the Christian utopia became real with the Jesuit missions led by Father Thomas Field (Fehily) (1549-1625), an Irishman from Limerick and his friend, Father (John Vincent?) Yates, from the Society of Jesus in Rome. They decided to volunteer for the mission to Brazil and disembarked in Bahia, where they remained until they were ordained priests three years later. Yates remained in that region while Field went to São Vicente, near the city of São Paulo, working for several years between that city and Rio de Janeiro. He accompanied Father Anchieta on several missions, where he witnessed his miracles. He learned Guarani and decided to go south,

answering the call of the Bishop of Tucumán in Argentina. When his boat with a group of religious men entered the estuary of the Rio de la Plata in 1587, they were boarded by an English ship whose crew thought they would find booty on board. When they realized that it was just a boat full of missionaries, they decided to hang them, but a 'miracle' happened: one of the sailors fell ill and died after throwing Father Ortega into the river. Thus, they were abandoned with almost no supplies, but they arrived at the port of Buenos Aires and were welcomed by the people. From there they went to Paraguay where they settled and took care of the indigenous people and the city of Asunción. In the religious historiography of the Irish in South America, Father Field was the first to unite the three countries, establishing a strong link in the development of religious activities in this region.

Map of the Amazon
Source: Saavedra y Guzmán (1639).

There are also records that the English and Irish settled in the Amazon between 1611 and 1620 when the Amazon Company began its activities with plantations and ventures on the north bank of the Amazon River between Cabo do Norte and the confluence of the Maicuru. The first Irish had gone to the Amazon as members of the Dutch West India Company. There were also traders, who later worked as smugglers, whose income came from tobacco, dyes and hardwoods. Captain Sir Bernard O'Brien Del Carpio narrates in his Chronicles the trip to the Amazon with Sir Henry Roe in 1620 and records the years they lived with the Indians. According to Joyce Lorimer (1989), by around 1640, the English and Irish were no longer interested in continuing to settle in the region.

Did you know?

During the English invasions in 1763 to Colonia del Sacramento (Uruguay) and in 1806 and 1807 to Buenos Aires, Irish soldiers deserted the army and stayed in the host country. In 1817 they joined General San Martín's Army of Liberation and became important historical figures in the wars of independence of South American countries.

Furthermore, in 1827, two thousand and four hundred Irish (including women and children) resident in Cork and Waterford were recruited as soldiers under the command of the Irish officer Colonel Cotter, who in the service of the newly independent Brazilian imperial army, embarked on what proved to be a disastrous war against the United Provinces of the Río de la Plata (including Argentina) for the territory of Cisplatina (Uruguay). Moreover, nothing of what was promised was given to them, neither accommodation nor food, nor land to settle. After the rebellion of July 10, 1828, the demands of the mercenaries stationed at Campo de Sant'Anna in Rio de Janeiro were met and some of them were discharged from the Army and sent to various agricultural centers in Rio Grande do Sul, Paraná and Santa Catarina. Another group formed by a hundred and one families went to Taperoá, in Bahia, to live in a colony called Saint Januaria. The land was fertile, the water was excellent, and they had the necessary agricultural tools and a daily meal for each settler until the settlement provided a means of subsistence. In 1828, Robert Walsh wrote in *Notícias do Brasil* "... they founded a colony directed by a commissioner appointed to regulate their affairs. These were the only settlers who showed good faith (...)". However, the correspondence of Brigadier José Egidio Gordilho de Barbuda to Emperor Pedro I, on September 26, 1829, states that the majority of the settlers "were men with no disposition whatsoever for cultivating the land, old, drunk, sick in general, incapable of carrying out colonization, thus rendering useless the expenditure that had been made with them" (*apud* Basto 1971, p. 132 & 34).

Ano IV — Rio de Janeiro. January 23, 1868 — N. 2

The Anglo-Brazilian Times

SUBSCRIPTION — FOR RIO DE JANEIRO — Year ..... 20$000 — Half-year ..... 11$000 — Single copies ... 1$000

POLITICAL, LITERARY, AND COMMERCIAL

EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR WILLIAM SCULLY

SUBSCRIPTION — FOR THE PROVINCES — Year ..... 22$000 — Half-year ..... 12$000

THE ANGLO-BRAZILIAN TIMES, OFFICE, No 1 RUA DO HOSPICIO

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Excerpt from the Anglo Brazilian Times*, edited by William Scully (Reproduction/ Public Domain).*

However, the largest Irish migration occurred in the nineteenth century after the exodus provoked by the Great Hunger. The target of the agents representing Brazil was not the suffering farming class in Ireland, but the displaced Irish living on the margins of English and American society, who were ready to emigrate again to revive their hopes of a better life elsewhere – a diaspora of the diaspora. William Scully, an Irish editor and owner of the English-language weekly *The Anglo-Brazilian Times* (1865–1884) in Rio de Janeiro, played an important role in promoting new immigration laws with prominent intellectuals, journalists, politicians, and farmers in the International Immigration Society, founded in 1866.

Scully also promoted in his newspaper the image of the Brazilian Emperor Pedro II as a benevolent monarch, who supported modernization, scientific development and social welfare (Marshall 2005, p. 23). He wrote about the education system and translated literary texts by important Brazilian writers such as José de Alencar, Machado de Assis and Salvador de Mendonça to show the state of the arts in the new land. He wrote the book *Cities and Provinces of Brazil* (1865) in which he describes the Brazilian regions suitable for

Watercolour by Hermann Rudolf Wendroth (Yates family blog in Brazil/ Public Domain)

agriculture and other livestock activities because the main political objective was to persuade his compatriots to emigrate to Brazil to work in the fields with the indirect purpose of accelerating the process of emancipation of slaves.

The Irish who came from New York were distributed throughout the various colonies in the states, the majority going to Porto Alegre in Rio Grande do Sul, where they dispersed to the German agricultural settlements near Nova Petrópolis and Caseiros. Others were sent to Cananéia and the south of Santos, but the Príncipe Dom Pedro Colony in Santa Catarina received the majority of the Irish. However, much difficulty was faced by the first Irish communities in Brazil, which formed the first 'New Ireland' in South America. The colonies where they settled lacked infrastructure and, most importantly, the immigrants who came had no experience in agriculture, which accelerated the decline of the settlements. The failure of the venture

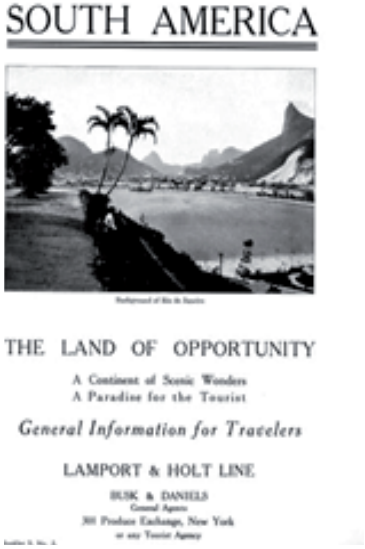
in Santa Catarina, where the Irish had abandoned the colonies and returned to Rio de Janeiro and the United States or to other countries, was kept in silence.

Regardless of the stories of success or failure, the Irish who settled in the 'new lands' of South America and their descendants always dreamed of returning to their homeland one day, even though they knew that this dream would not come true. This yearning configured them at that time as diasporic subjects.

Did you know that Emperor Dom Pedro II visited Ireland from July 7 to 11, 1877, including Belfast, the beautiful Giant's Causeway, and the cities of Dublin, Killarney and Cork?

Do you know the story of Narcisa Emilia O'Leary, wife of José Bonifácio de Andrada e Silva, the Patriarch of Independence?

François-René Moreaux - O imperador D. Pedro II, sua esposa Teresa Cristina e suas filhas, princesas Isabel e Leopoldina, 1857. (Wikipedia)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Advertisement from the period of Irish emigration to Brazil and South America (Reproduction/Public Domain).

Excerpt "To the Clergy of Ireland". The Anglo-Brazilian Times, nº 41, Anno II, Rio de Janeiro, 09 October 1866.

Irish travel narratives depicting nineteenth-century Brazil

In Rio de Janeiro, the Irishman William Scully became the propagator of a positive image of Brazil with *The Anglo-Brazilian Times*: it is the land that offers 'greater opportunities' than other countries chosen by emigrants. In his letter to the clergy of Ireland in 1866[4], Scully asked them to encourage the arrival of those who worked in the fields and compared the benefits of Brazil with those of the United States. Scully reinforces the myth of the paradisiacal climate of medieval writings (eternal spring) – this is healthier, 'the summer heat never reaches extremes'. The winters are more like the Irish summer, 'although they are hotter in the north and colder in the south and in the interior, where frosts occasionally occur'. He

also highlights that although the official religion is Roman Catholic, there is religious tolerance and that it promotes justice and the spirit of progress: 'the country of the future'.

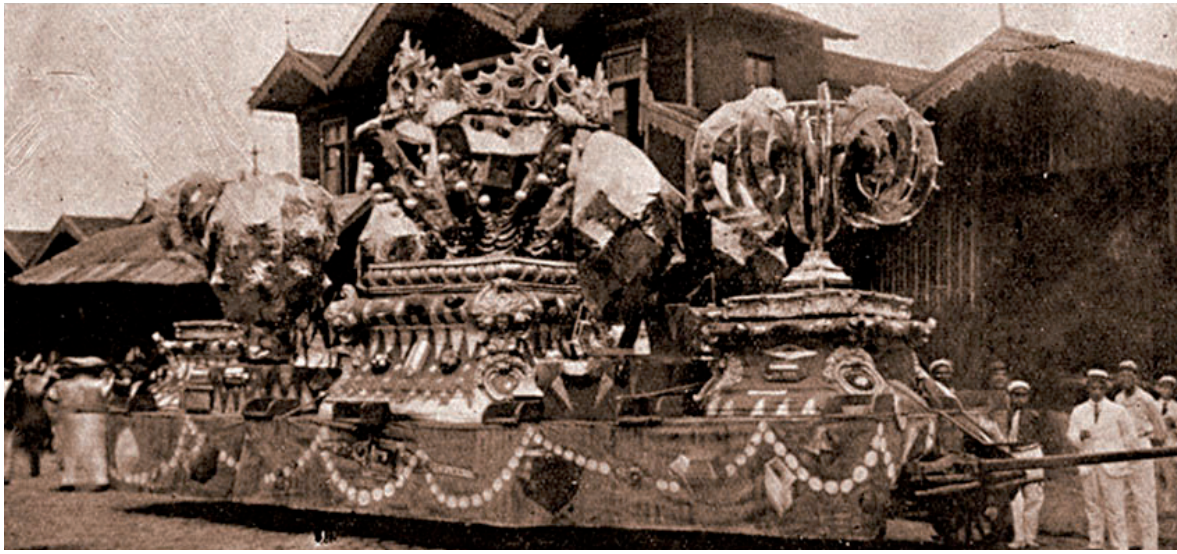
Among the first literary representations written about Brazil are the narratives of Irish travellers, such as *A Search for Fortune* by Hamilton Lindsay-Bucknall, which portrays his impressions of Argentina and Brazil in the 1870s. The chapter on Brazil was translated into Portuguese and published as *Um jovem irlandês no Brasil em 1874* (Hachette do Brasil, 1976).

Michael Mulhall and his brother Edward founded the newspaper *The Standard (1861-1959)* in Buenos Aires where they lived. They travelled throughout Brazil on several occasions during their vacations and recorded the economy of each region in detail, reporting on the best provinces for immigrants to settle – the different types of work, the wages they could earn, and emphasized how welcome the Irish were in Pará, São Paulo, and Rio de Janeiro. This was 'progressive Brazil,' a land of opportunity. In *Rio Grande do Sul and its German Colonies* (1873), Michael Mulhall recommended Porto Alegre for its 'wonderful scenery and friendly people, so little known to the outside world.' These books, as well as the newspapers, present the strategies of the Irish 'movements' to South America.

Lithograph reproduced with permission from the Library of the Institute of Brazilian Studies/USP (2002).

Michael Mulhall and his wife Marion also kept travel diaries in which they recorded their impressions of the places they visited and registered the economic progress of the regions:

> It took twenty-four days from here to Cuyabá in canoes manned by tame Indians, the San Lorenzo being so shallow that they cannot row, but have to push up-stream with poles about thirty miles a day. If they come short of provisions they shoot monkeys, for the greater part of the voyage is through swamps and forest, destitute of human habitation. (Marion Mulhall, *Between the Amazon and Andes.* p. 192)



Fenian Club float in 1922. Reproduction: Fon Fon Magazine/*Public Domain.*

Did you know about the existence of the Fenian Club, founded in 1869 as a Carnival group, whose name is inspired by the Fenian movement that supported the fight for Irish independence in the 1860s? In Brazil, it helped finance the liberation of slaves.

How is Brazil revisited in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries?

Narratives of the Irish diaspora reveal a foreign gaze on the imagined land in search of new opportunities. Up to the first decades of the twentieth century, transnational narratives present a utopian vision of integration while nostalgic for their homeland using a metaphoric language. Diaspora writers have a multidimensional vision as they experience different realities of cultural intersections. The main narrative form is (auto)biographical, predominantly travelogues narrated in the first person with themes of cultural encounters, descriptions of geographical spaces and habits. Some are also narratives in the third person singular denouncing social

injustices, or in the third person plural representing a collective 'I' of the diasporic community. Short stories and chronicles were also published in English in the community newspapers. In the second half of the twentieth century and at the turn of the twenty-first century, there is a fictional and poetic historiographical revisionism by writers who emerged from the following generations who are writing in the language of the host country and by Irish writers who visit South America and write about their perceptions in English.

Several writers, poets, playwrights and filmmakers visited Brazil in the second half of the twentieth century and in the twenty-first century. Research their names and what they wrote. https://catedrawbyeats.fflch.usp.br/intercambios-academicos

For example, the poet Paul Durcan portrayed Brazil in his book *Greetings to our friends in Brazil* (1999). Moya Canon wrote the beautiful poem 'Hands' when she was returning to Ireland. Mary O'Donnell, in the text 'São Paulo Days', composed the poem 'Missing Brazil'.

Mary O'Donnell

Moya Cannon

Scan the QR Code to read the complete poems by Moya Canon and Mary O'Donnell about their travels in Brazil.

Ireland and Brazil: a cultural dialogue

Brazil, a land that has always welcomed immigrants from different countries, generates transcultural narratives recognizing in them the human being with universal rights and duties.

Activities: A cultural diaspora

1. Share your family history or of a friend from an immigrant family.
2. Search for your cultural roots.
3. Provide examples of cultural diaspora: five Irish writers that were translated into Portuguese, five Irish plays performed in Brazil and five films by Irish directors shown in Brazilian cinemas.

Notes

1 This chapter is based on my research on the Irish in South America, part of FAPESP Thematic Project 2006-2009. It was published in the book *Narrativas de la diáspora irlandesa bajo la Cruz del Sur* (Buenos Aires: Corregidor, 2011)

2 The Penal Laws were a series of discriminatory laws enacted primarily in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries by the Irish Parliament to suppress Catholicism and elevate the Protestant minority while disenfranchising and disempowering the Catholic majority.

3 *Irish Migration Studies in Latin America*. Vol. 4, No. 3: July 2006. https://www.irlandeses.org/0607.pdf

4 Published in *The Anglo-Brazilian Times*, nº 41, Anno II, Rio de Janeiro, 09 October 1866.

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The Easter Rising of 1916: How Ireland Fought for Freedom

Camila Franco Batista

Between 1912 and 1923, Ireland experienced one of the most important moments in its history. This era, known as the 'Decade of Revolutions,' marked the country's transformation from a British colony to an independent nation. The most famous event of this time was the Easter Rising of 1916, which followed years of resistance and uprisings.

At the start of the 20th century, Ireland underwent major cultural, economic, and political shifts. The Gaelic Revival, spearheaded by artists and intellectuals like William Butler Yeats and Lady Augusta Gregory, sought to revive the Irish language and cultural traditions. Economically, Ireland was progressing, with new banks and railway lines. Politically, many advocated for increased Irish autonomy from the United Kingdom, through a movement known as Home Rule. However, the outbreak of World War I (1914–1918) accelerated nationalist movements, setting the stage for the Easter Rising.

Did you know?
William Butler Yeats, a key figure of the Gaelic Revival, won the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1923. His plays and poems are foundational to Irish literature.

How did the English arrive in Ireland?

English involvement in Ireland began in the twelfth century when a local ruler, Dermot MacMurrough, invited Norman forces (descendants of French conquerors of England) to help reclaim his kingdom. The Normans, led by Richard de Clare (Strongbow), gained territory, and in 1171, King Henry II declared himself Lord of Ireland. Initially, English control was limited to the Dublin area, known as 'The Pale,' while Irish lords ruled the rest of the island.

In the sixteenth century, King Henry VIII intensified English rule by declaring himself King of Ireland and establishing the Anglican Church as the official religion. This led to widespread land confiscation from Irish Catholics, with land granted to Protestant settlers. In the eighteenth century, the Penal Laws severely restricted Catholics, barring them from owning land or freely practicing their faith. The 1801 Act of Union formally integrated Ireland into the United Kingdom, dissolving its Dublin-based parliament.

Nationalism: Irish resistance

British dominance consistently faced resistance. Irish nationalism took shape through movements seeking independence, including the United Irishmen Rebellion (1798), the 1803 Rising, the Young Irelanders' Rebellion (1848), and the Fenian Rising (1867). These

uprisings, influenced by the French and American revolutions, aimed to establish an Irish republic.

The United Irishmen, led by Theobald Wolfe Tone, launched a failed rebellion in 1798. In 1803, Robert Emmet organized another unsuccessful uprising. In 1848, the Young Irelanders, led by William Smith O'Brien, attempted a revolt that also failed. The Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB), a secret organization founded in 1858, orchestrated the 1867 Fenian Rising. Although unsuccessful, it kept the spirit of independence alive. One of its leaders, Thomas Clarke, later played a crucial role in organizing the 1916 Easter Rising.

The Easter Rising

By the early twentieth century, the nationalist movement had gained momentum. The Home Rule movement succeeded in passing legislation to restore the Irish parliament in 1914, but World War I delayed its implementation, frustrating many nationalists.

Determined to act, the IRB, along with the Irish Volunteers and the Irish Citizen Army, planned the Easter Rising. During Easter Week in 1916, about 1,600 rebels seized key locations in Dublin, including the General Post Office (GPO). Patrick Pearse, leader of the Irish Volunteers, proclaimed the Irish Republic. After six days of intense fighting, British forces suppressed the uprising with overwhelming force, devastating central Dublin. Approximately 429 people were killed, including 310 civilians. Sixteen leaders were executed for treason, and many others were imprisoned, sparking widespread sympathy for the nationalist cause.

In his court martial defense speech before execution, Pearse declared:

> If you strike us down now we shall rise again and renew the fight. You cannot conquer Ireland; you cannot extinguish the Irish passion for freedom. If our deed has not been sufficient to win freedom then our children will win it by a better deed. (Pearse, 1916)

Did you know?

During the Easter Rising, the General Post Office (GPO) in Dublin served as the rebel headquarters. Today, it stands as a symbol of Irish nationalism and a prominent tourist site.

Photo: Public Domain

Legacy: 'A terrible beauty is born'

Although the Easter Rising was militarily unsuccessful, it galvanized nationalist sentiment and paved the way for the Irish War of Independence (1919–1921). In 1922, Ireland became the Irish Free State and later the Republic of Ireland.

The Rising inspired numerous works of literature and art, including Yeats' poem 'Easter, 1916,' which reflects on the rebellion with the line: 'A terrible beauty is born' (Yeats, 2008). The poem suggests that the Rising planted the seeds of a broader movement for independence.

Sean O'Casey's play *The Plough and the Stars* also portrays the Rising's impact, especially on Dublin's poor. The struggle for independence involved immense sacrifice but also demonstrated the Irish people's resilience and desire for self-determination.

To listen

The Easter Rising is referenced in pop culture, including the song "Zombie" by Irish rock band The Cranberries. The lyrics say: "It's the same old theme / Since nineteen sixteen / In your head, in your head / They're still fighting" (O'Riordan, 1994). The song connects the legacy of the Rising to the Troubles, the sectarian conflict in Northern Ireland.

Did you know?

One Easter Rising leader, Roger Casement, served as British Consul General in Rio de Janeiro, Santos, and Pará in the early twentieth century. He played a crucial role in exposing human rights abuses against Indigenous peoples in the Amazon during the rubber boom.

Casement was knighted but later embraced Irish nationalism and became deeply involved in the independence movement. Learn more at: https://bndigital.bn.gov.br/exposicoes/irlandeses-no-brasil/roger-casement/

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Who's Who: A Brief History of Roger Casement

Mariana Bolfarine

Photo: Diário da Amazônia de Roger Casement, *São Paulo: Edusp, 2016.*

Who was Roger Casement? Hero or traitor? Rebel or revolutionary? This is a question whose answer is still somewhat disputed. Now is the time to find out.

The life of Roger David Casement, a British consul turned into an Irish revolutionary, is fascinating and deserves to be highlighted for being part of one of the most violent chapters in the history of the transatlantic world, the rubber cycle, which reached its peak in the first half of the twentieth century. Roger David Casement, born in Sandycove, Dublin, on September 1, 1864, was the son of a Catholic mother and a Protestant father. As a teenager, he was orphaned and taken to County Antrim in Northern Ireland. After completing his studies at Ballymena Academy, he moved to Liverpool. Shortly

afterwards, his uncle, Edward Bannister, placed him in the Elder Dempster Merchant Company, his passport to Africa.

Casement in the Congo and Putumayo

Casement began his journey as a clerk, but it wasn't long before he was appointed colonial agent of the Belgian king Leopold II' International Association of the Congo, which later became the Congo Free State. Following accusations of atrocities committed against the native peoples, in 1903 Casement went to the upper Congo to investigate and report back to the British government on the conditions of the rubber extraction economy. Casement found that the rubber collectors were starving, they were being flogged and had their limbs amputated by members of the *Force Publique*, an armed force of native troops commanded by European officers. The result was the Report from His Majesty's Consul at Boma (1904), consisting of a dossier of evidence gathered from the statements of the missionaries and the victims themselves.

Now more experienced and having been noticed by the Crown, he was appointed British Consul in Portuguese Africa, in Lourenço Marques (1895-1898) and then in Brazil, in Santos (1906-1908) and Belém do Pará (1908-1909), and Consul General in Rio de Janeiro (1909-1913). In 1911, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs assigned him to a second trip to Putumayo, a region disputed between Peru, Brazil and Colombia, to investigate the conditions of the rubber collectors of the Peruvian Amazon Company, registered in London. His report, Treatment of British Colonial Subjects and Native Indians Employed in the Collection of rubber.

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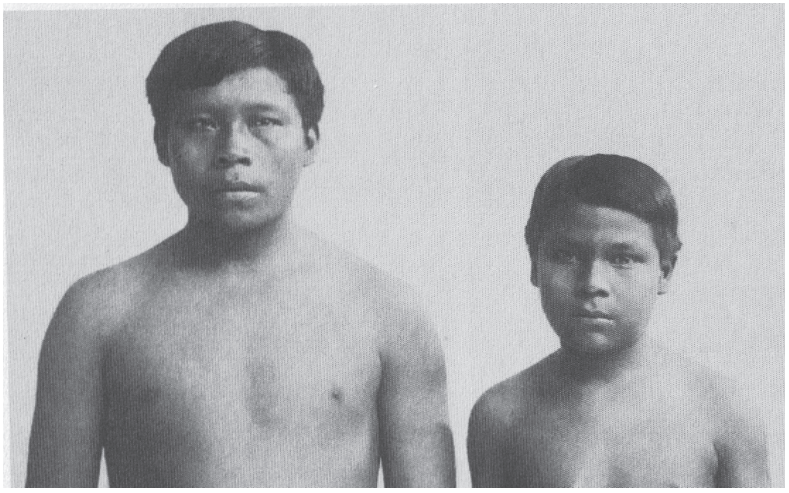
a second trip to Putumayo, a disputed region between Peru, Brazil and Colombia, to investigate the conditions of the rubber collectors of the Peruvian Amazon Company, registered in London. His report, *Treatment of British Colonial Subjects and Native Indians Employed in the Collection of Rubber in the Putumayo District* (1912), describes the policy of terror practiced by the Arana brothers and contributed to the company's bankruptcy. In addition, in order to convince Europe to support the cause of the Putumayo Indians, Casement took two indigenous boys, Omarino and Arédomi, with him to England.

The years Casement spent in Brazil were decisive in turning him against imperialism and are also described in the *Amazon Journal of Roger Casement*(1997). This led him to connect the suffering of the Irish affected by a typhoid epidemic in Connemara – which he dubbed the 'Irish Putumayo' – with that of the indigenous people of the Amazon. Soon after, he became a nationalist.



Arédomi, also known as Ricudo, and Omarino.
Source: Diário da Amazônia de Roger Casement*, 2016.*

Did you know?

In the Congo, Casement met the Polish writer Joseph Conrad, writer of the masterpiece *Heart of Darkness* (1902). They shared the same room and talked about life in this remote outpost of the empire (Letter to John Quinn, 24 May 1916 - The collected letters of Joseph Conrad, Vol. 5, Cambridge UP, p 596-597).

When Casement was Consul General in Rio de Janeiro, in a letter he commented on the tragic circumstances of the controversial death of the Brazilian writer Euclides da Cunha: "[...] it is evident that Dr. Cunha, far from being murdered, was shot in self-defence" (Casement, 1909, apud Mitchell, 2011, p. 71).

Casement claimed that the word Brazil had Irish origins (*Hy-Brasil*), a hypothesis discussed by researchers such as Geraldo Cantarino and Laura P.Z. de Izarra: "However it may seem, Brazil does not owe its name to the abundance of a certain die wood, but to Ireland." (Casement, 1910, apud Mitchell, 2011, p. 79).

Casement collected butterflies. There are specimens he collected during his research in Putumayo displayed in the Natural History Museum in Dublin.

Natural History Museum of Ireland
https://images.app.goo.gl/YKGHYHH9VTX6NE6VA

Casement and the Easter Rising

As Casement felt unable to cope with another consular post, he resigned from his official duties, which coincided with a time of political unrest in the north of Ireland. In 1913, the leader of the Ulster Unionist Council, Edward Carson, decided that a provisional government would be set up if Home Rule, was granted. As the north of Ireland continued to reject the Home Rule bill, the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF) was armed and mobilized into action. After a negative response from John Redmond, leader of the Irish Party in Westminster, Casement and Eoin McNeill decided to arm the Irish Volunteers. They organized a meeting at the home the renowned historian Alice Stopford Green, on Grosvenor Road in London, with influential intellectuals such as Erskine Childers, Mary Spring Rice and Darrel Figgis. The 'Howth gunrunning', as the operation was called, managed to transport 1,500 Mauser rifles and 45,000 rounds of ammunition from Germany aboard the *Asgard* and the *Kelpie* and land them in Ireland on July 26, 1914 (Ó Siocháin, 2008, p. 376).

Mary Spring Rice and Molly Childers on board the Asgard, 1914
Photo: Unknown photographer. Commons/wikipedia. Public Domain

The *Asgard* set sail from Conway in North Wales on 3 July. On board were Erskine and Molly Childers, Mary Rice, Gordon Shephard and two fishermen from Gola Island in Co. Donegal, Patrick McGinley and Charles Duggan.

Casement on board a German submarine

In 1914, Casement went to Germany to seek support for Irish independence against England, and stayed there for two years. In 1916, he returned to Ireland aboard a German submarine U19, responsible for loading arms for the Easter Rising, but was arrested on 21 April and taken to the Tower of London for questioning.

Despite international efforts to grant him a pardon, Casement was hanged for high treason on 3 August, 1916. What determined his execution – and the fact that he was forgotten for decades – was the discovery by British intelligence agencies of diaries with homosexual

content, the Black Diaries, whose authenticity is still questioned by researchers today. The Irish painter John Lavery immortalized his trial in the work *High Treason, Court of Criminal Appeal: The Trial of Sir Roger Casement 1916.*

Casement as a ghost

Years after his execution, Casement remained a controversial figure in England and Ireland. As Casement was hanged for high treason

Roger Casement and Robert Monteith pictured with Captain Weisbach and the crew of the U-19 en route to Ireland in April 1916. In: 16 Lives. Roger Casement*, by Angus Mitchell. Dublin: The O'Brien Press, 2013.*

– sometime after the execution of the other rebels who fought in the Easter Rising –, he was buried in the prison yard under quicklime, on the grounds of Pentonville Prison in London. However, in the 1960s, in an independent Ireland, there was a discussion about bringing Casement's remains back to Ireland. Before he died, Casement had expressed his wish to be buried in County Antrim, Northern Ireland. However, as the region is part of the United Kingdom, this wish was

not granted. In 1965, Casement's remains were finally exhumed and taken to Glasnevin, the Nationalist cemetery in Dublin. This proves that, after his death, Casement remained a symbol of the troubled relationship between England and Ireland.

This episode was adapted into a radio play *Cries from Casement as his Bones are Brought to Dublin* (1973), by David Rudkin, broadcast by the BBC. In addition, the famous Irish writer William Butler Yeats represented him in the poem 'The Ghost of Roger Casement' (1936),

High Treason, Court of Criminal Appeal, the Trial of Sir Roger Casement*, by John Lavery (1856–1941), Collection Dublin City Gallery, The Hugh Lane.*

as a ghost who continues to knock on the door of Anglo-Irish relations. But what Casement really left us with was his transnational activism and his contribution to what is now known as human rights.

Did you know?

Roger Casement appears as a character in some literary works, such as novels and radio plays. The novel *The Lost World* (1912), by Arthur Conan Doyle, combines prehistoric life and the crimes of Putumayo, in which Casement appears as the character Lord John Roxton. Also by Conan Doyle is *The Crime of the Congo* (1909), which deals with atrocities in the Congo. From the writer of Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, the American Mark Twain, there is *King Leopold's Soliloquy* (1905), about the atrocities in the Congo, which are also the subject of *Ulysses* (1922), by James Joyce; King Leopold's Ghost (1998), by Adam Rothschild, Heart of Darkness (1902), by Joseph Conrad. There's also the historical novel The Dream of the Celt, by Colombian Mario Vargas Llosa, whose leitmotif is the trial and execution of Casement. Jamie O'Neil's At Swim, Two Boys (2001) deals with queer issues. The most famous, however, is the aforementioned poem 'The Ghost of Roger Casement', by the famous poet William Butler Yeats. His life was also the subject of two documentaries, *The Ghost of Roger Casement* (2002), by Irish filmmaker Alan Gilsenan and the award-winning Secrets of Putumayo (2020), by Amazonian filmmaker Aurélio Michiles.

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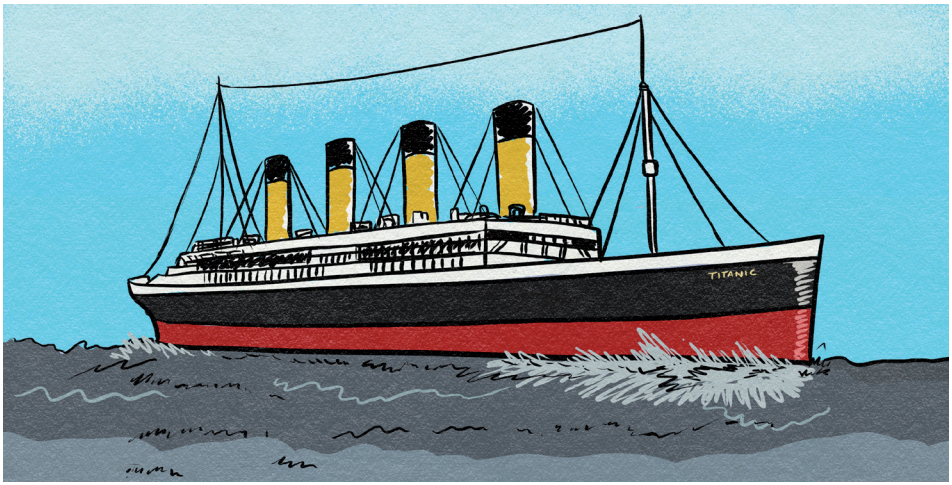
Northern Ireland: from Titanic to Game of Thrones

Jessica Grant Craveiro



In 2004, the Northern Irish artist Rita Duffy (1959) announced she wanted to tow an iceberg until Belfast, Northern Ireland's capital. The project 'Thaw' questioned environmental, cultural, and political matters. In an interview to the newspaper *The Guardian*, Duffy said that ice was a way of describing the country: 'Maybe it's time to come out of denial and confront what has sunk us. [...] The iceberg is a figure of fear and I hope its melting will have a cathartic effect. Ice is the alchemic opposite of the fire of hatred and sectarianism, mistrust and dislike, that has burned here'.

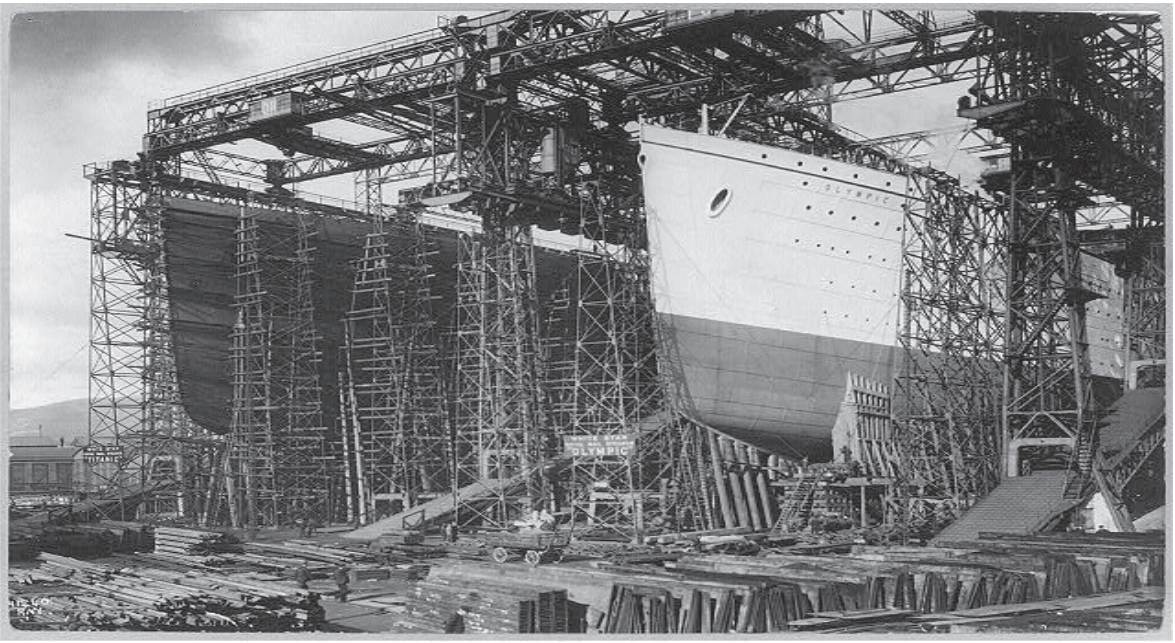
Duffy refers to the iceberg that sank the RMS Titanic, designed, and built in a shipyard in Northern Ireland. The shipbuilding industry was an important space for the Northern Irish Protestants and economy.

The imagery of Titanic's great success recalls the country's history, which seemed to be developing when it came across a sectarian conflict, the iceberg that sank it.

Another Ireland?

What would this iceberg they need to confront be? And what is Northern Ireland? To understand, we need to go back in time.

The British Crown colonised the island through the plantation system; this means that the Irish were removed from areas that were resettled with people the government trusted. As the monarchy had split with the Pope, these people were English and Scottish Protestants. In the North, in the province of Ulster, a larger number of immigrants changed the nature of its society.



The building of the Titanic and Olympic ships at the shipyard in Belfast.
Credit: Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. (file no. LC-USZ62-67359)

The Irish remained mainly Catholic and, without their lands, together with the decline in use of the Irish language, Catholicism became a distinctive characteristic of Irishness. For this reason, when one mentions Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland, one means people whose origin is Irish or British, respectively. It is an ethnic and national issue.

Years later, there were talks of an autonomous government in Ireland (Home Rule). However, Protestants Unionists (in favor of the union with the United Kingdom) were against it. They organized paramilitary groups to prevent it. While a minority in the island, they were a majority in some of the counties in the province of Ulster, and so a proposal to divide the region emerged.

After the Easter Rising in 1916, the Irish War of Independence started in 1919 and, in the following year, The Government of Ireland Act was approved. It established two parliaments of self-government, dividing the island. Northern Ireland came into existence as a region with six of the Ulster's counties.

However, Nationalists continued to fight for the independence until 1921. Long negotiations between the British and the Irish led to the Anglo-Irish Treaty. This established the Irish Free State but kept Northern Ireland as part of the United Kingdom, as it is to this day.

The iceberg

Although partition was designed to maintain the Protestant majority in Northern Ireland, there were still Catholics. However, they didn't enjoy the same rights or access to voting, jobs, and housing. As a result, in the 1960s, groups began to organise themselves to fight for civil rights.

In politics, things also began to change. Nationalists, that is, Catholics in favour of a united Ireland, decided to take their seats in parliament and act as opposition. Also, the prime ministers of Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland met in 1965. All this caused fear

among Unionists, who reorganised paramilitary groups such as the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF) and began sectarian killings in 1966.

On the other hand, the civil rights marches were harshly repressed by the police in 1968 and in the following year, when loyalists attacked the demonstrators. Riots and violence broke out and, in 1969, the British army was dispatched.

At this time, the Catholics organised their own paramilitary groups. The most known is the Provisional Irish Republican Army, or Provisional IRA. First, it was for their defence, then the armed fighting began to seek the unification of Ireland.

The conflict was marked by sectarian violence in attacks with shootings and bombs. This period, from 1968 to 1998, is called The Troubles. The euphemism shouldn't imply that the violence wasn't significant, on the contrary.

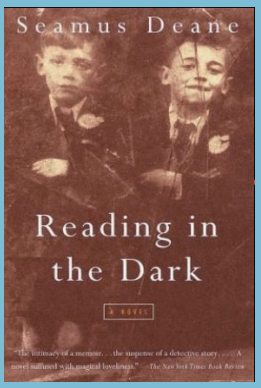
In the most violent year, 1972, there were 10,628 shootings and 1,853 bombs. A civil rights march was targeted by the military, resulting

in 13 deaths, known as 'Bloody Sunday'. Irish band U2 remembered the date in the song "Sunday Bloody Sunday" (1983), which asks: 'who has won?' It was played live for the first time in Belfast, receiving the public's approval. Also in 1972 there was the 'Bloody Friday', a republican attack (more extreme nationalists) with nine victims.

The sectarian violence divided the cities. Barricades, later transformed into peace lines, separating Protestant and Catholic residential areas. You can see this change and the impact on its residents in the film 'Belfast' (2021), by director Kenneth Branagh, winner of the Oscar for Best Original Screenplay.

Reading suggestion

Seamus Deane's award-winning *Reading in the Dark* (1996) presents the beginning of the conflict from the perspective of a Catholic child in the region of Derry.



Marked on the walls

As neighbourhoods became homogenous, a tradition began to mark the walls. Originated from a Protestant practice, mural paintings grew to include Catholics. The images referenced historical elements, flags, and paramilitary groups.

Catholics were able to paint murals without police repression after the 1981 Hunger Strike, when Republican prisoners demanded through a hunger strike the recognition of their status as political

prisoners. Bobby Sands, elected to the Assembly, and nine other protesters died and are still honoured in the murals today.

In terms of recent representations, a successful TV series has also been produced. The award-winning series 'Derry Girls' (2018-2022), by director Lisa McGee, follows teenage Catholic girls in the early 1990s. With laughs, it shows the daily life that went on during The Troubles until the peace process.

Peace and a new moment

In 1993, a Republican attack in England killed two children. 'Another mother's breaking/Heart is taking over,' says the lyrics of 'Zombie' by Irish band The Cranberries. The song, a protest for peace, was released in 1994, the same year as one of the most important ceasefires of the Troubles.

After extensive negotiations, the paramilitary groups on both sides put down their weapons. The Provisional IRA broke the ceasefire

with a bomb in 1996 at Canary Wharf. Negotiations continued until the Peace Agreement was signed, known as the Belfast or Good Friday Agreement because it was signed on this date in April 1998.

The document was the fruit of long multilateral talks led by US politician George J. Mitchell. The agreement guaranteed equal rights and self-determination of national identity. The documentary 'Wave Goodbye To Dinosaurs' (2017) portrays the story from the perspective of the Northern Ireland Women's Coalition, a mixed party created to bring female representation. This was another moment when Catholic and Protestant women united for peace. Earlier, in the 1970s, Mairead Corrigan and Betty Williams organised the Peace People and won the 1976 Nobel Peace Prize.

Peace has allowed Northern Ireland to emerged into new experiences. In recent years, the film industry has grown, attracting tourism. Series such as 'Game of Thrones' (2011-2019) and short films like the Oscar-winning 'An Irish Goodbye' (2022) have been shot in the region.

Tourism also focuses on its natural beauties, such as the Giant's Causeway, a natural formation of basalt columns, and the Glens of Antrim, covered in green vegetation. Lough Neagh is the largest freshwater lake on the island and in the United Kingdom. Belfast also has a museum dedicated to the history of Titanic.

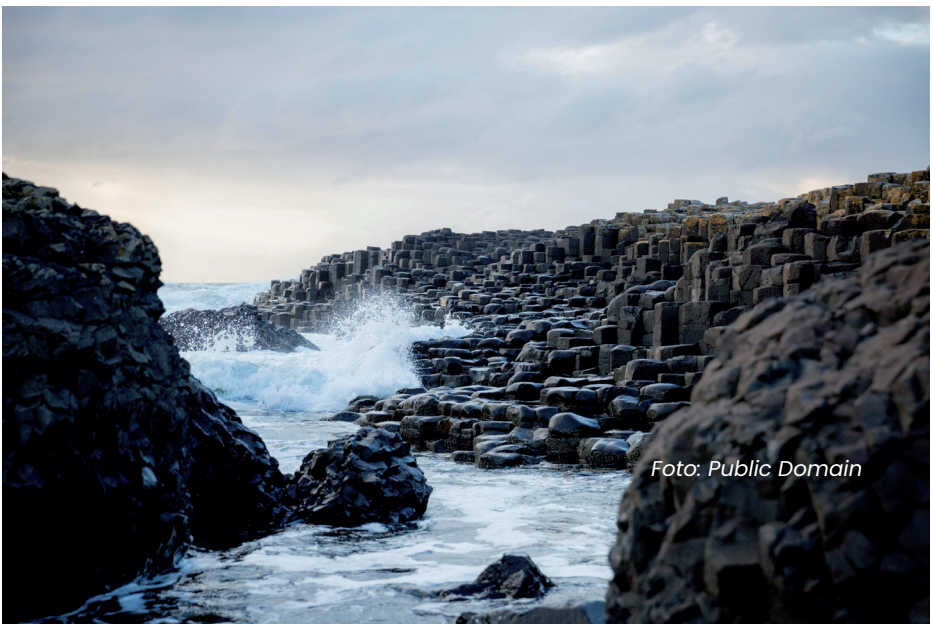


Foto: Public Domain

Ireland and Brazil: a cultural dialogue

Despite being a small part of the island, Northern Ireland has lots of history and culture. In the midst of traumatic memories, it shows the resilience of a people who have persevered with life and have learnt to live with differences.

Listening suggestion

In the 1980s, the Field Day company was founded in the city of Derry as a cultural and intellectual response to the Troubles. Their plays and publications attracted critical attention to the situation. Listen to this podcast in English to find out about one of the participants, Nobel laureate Seamus Heaney, and to hear his poetry. His book 100 Poems is available in Portuguese.

To continue researching: The University of Ulster has an online archive full of references, dates and documents about the Troubles, updated regularly.

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2. LITERATURE

Nothing Ever Escaped Jonathan Swift's Sarcasm

Sandra Guardini Vasconcelos

George Orwell once stated that 'if I had to make a list of six books which were to be preserved when all others were destroyed, I would certainly put Gulliver's Travels among them'. This is no minor praise coming from a writer who was, in nearly every way, the opposite of the creator of the surgeon-traveller who decides to venture across the seas in the course of his profession.

Jonathan Swift was born in Dublin on 30 November 1667. He was the son of an English lawyer who had settled in Ireland after the Stuart Restoration (1660), and of Abigail Erick, the daughter of an English clergyman. After his father's premature death, Jonathan Swift became dependent on the generosity of an uncle, who granted him access to a quality education – first at Kilkenny Grammar School, then considered the best school in Ireland, and later at Trinity College, where he earned a Bachelor of Arts in February 1686, 'by special favor.'

Swift remained at Trinity College until 1689 as a Master of Arts candidate. However, the disturbances that had begun to spread through Dublin following the Glorious Revolution (1688–89) led him to seek refuge in England, where he was taken in by a distant relative of his mother, Sir William Temple. Swift lived with Temple almost continuously until Temple died in 1699. Swift's humanist education owed much to his patron, a diplomat and essayist for whom he served as secretary and disciple. Thanks to Temple's good influence, Swift received a Master of Arts degree from Oxford University in 1692. Over the course of nearly a decade, Swift returned to Ireland twice. On one of these occasions, he was ordained Minister of the Anglican Church (1695) and appointed to the parish of Kilroot, near Belfast. In 1713, Swift became Dean of Saint Patrick's Cathedral in Dublin, a prestigious post in the Anglican hierarchy.

Between 1691 and 1694, Swift wrote several poems, including six odes, though none held great literary value. His true talent only revealed itself when he replaced verse with prose satire. His first important work was the collection constituted by 'A Tale of a Tub', 'The Battle of the Books', and 'A Discourse Concerning the Mechanical

Operation of the Spirit', published in 1704, which quickly earned him great renown. His pamphlets and essays, which became a key platform for voicing his ideas and criticisms, exemplify a transgressive and irreverent mode of thinking, shaped by his education, intelligence, and keen insight. The religious antagonisms and political clashes between the Whigs and Tories form the backdrop for a polemicist whose sharp pen served as a weapon against societal problems, injustice, the corruption of taste, and as a tool for defending Ireland against the exploitation and poverty imposed by the English crown. 'A Modest Proposal for Preventing the Children of Poor People from Being a Burthen to Their Parents or Country, and for Making Them Beneficial to the Publick' (1729) stands as one of the most scathing and bitter indictments of hunger and destitution, deploying absurdity by suggesting that infants be 'offered for sale to persons of quality and fortune' as food. A strange idea, beneath which there is a deep sense of outrage, revealed through irony as it lays bare the image of a nation bled dry under English rule.

Did you know?

Whig: The current term for the liberal party in the United Kingdom. Formed in the 17th century, it expressed the interests of the financial and mercantile bourgeoisie, as well as a portion of the bourgeois aristocracy.

Tory: A political party that defends the interests of the landed aristocracy and the high clergy, and the traditions of the feudal past. The Whigs and the Tories succeeded each other in power.

One of the most feared writers of his time, Swift spared nothing and no one from his sarcasm and mockery: hypocrisy, fanaticism, the vanity of human desires, pedantry, religious factions, political parties, wealthy bourgeois, and important people from the court. Widely regarded as Swift's masterpiece, Gulliver's Travels is his most brilliant and controversial satire. With his prosaic style and sober

tone, it refers to important events of English history disguised as an adventure story in which the main character, as he visits imaginary places, meets unknown peoples, eccentric behaviours, and absurd situations.

Gulliver's Travels was published anonymously in 1726. It parodies the travel literature so popular at the time, blending it with satire of English politics and habits. Gulliver's Travels is narrated in the first person, and the protagonist is Lemuel Gulliver, a surgeon and sea captain who travels to remote regions of the world. In each one of his four books, Gulliver sets off on a voyage only to end up in a strange land after a shipwreck or another misfortune. In the first part, Gulliver shares his experience in Lilliput, whose inhabitants are less than fifteen centimetres tall – something that emphasizes their pettiness and moral limitations. There, he is referred to as the 'Man-Mountain' due to his height. Book II takes Gulliver to Brobdingnag, where the inhabitants are giants, and his small stature exposes him to dangers and indignities. There, he becomes a favourite of the court, although

Excerpt from Gulliver's Travels, a 2010 film based on Swift's work and starring Jack Black. Photo: Reproduction

the king responds with disgust when Gulliver shares the wonderful achievements of his civilization. Once Gulliver had finished his report on English government and history, the king concluded that the English must be a race of 'odious vermin.'

On the third journey, he visits the floating island of Laputa, whose distracted inhabitants are so absorbed in higher speculations that they are under constant risk of accidental collisions. In Lagado, capital of Balnibarbri, Gulliver finds farmlands in ruins and people living in misery, following the dictates of an academic elite, as explained by his host. At the Academy of Lagado (a parody of the English Royal Society), he finds mad scholars engaged in impractical studies. In Luggnagg, he meets the Struldbruggs, a race of immortals condemned to eternal senility, described in stark, brutal detail. In Book IV, Gulliver visits the utopic land of Houyhnhnms – serious, rational, and virtuous horses. There is also another race on the island, the Yahoo, physically disgusting and cruel creatures that are used for manual labour by the Houyhnhnms. Although at first Gulliver pretends he does not recognise them, he ends up admitting that the Yahoos are human beings. He finds perfect happiness among the Houyhnhnms, but he is only a more advanced Yahoo. Rejected by them, he must return to England, where he can no longer tolerate society and his fellow humans.

Overall, *Gulliver's Travels* is an extremely critical reflection on human societies. It holds up a kind of mirror in which humanity must see its imperfections and failures. If today the references have been lost, it is worth recalling that Swift selected, adapted, and modified contemporary facts to build the settings of the book. The political disputes between Whigs and Tories are represented by men who wear high-heeled shoes (conservatives) and men who wear low-heeled shoes (liberals). Lilliput is England, perpetually at war with Blefuscu (France). But it is Swift's shift in perspective that allows him to expose the follies, madness, and weaknesses of humankind: the contrast between the little Lilliputians and Gulliver's big body, in Part I; Gulliver's small body compared to the giants of Brobdingnag; the inversion of horses and human beings – as to highlight the ridiculous of arrogance, pride, and false values. His aggressive criticism, however, does not erase his love for truth and his staunch defence of freedom of thought and expression. Scorn was used by him as a weapon wielded against hypocrisy, corruption, and pettiness. His indignation touched nearly every aspect of life in the early eighteenth century.

It was once said about him: 'It is Swift's peculiar good fortune that his book can dispense with the interpretation of which it is nevertheless susceptible and may be equally enjoyed whether its inner meaning is apprehended or not. It is so true, so entirely based upon the facts of human nature, that the question what particular class of persons supplied the author with his examples of folly or misdoing, however interesting to the commentator, may be neglected by the reader.'

Ironically, however, the adventures of the traveling surgeon eventually overshadowed his scathing attack on the weaknesses of the human race, and Jonathan Swift's magnum opus came to be seen as an adventure story – classic of children's literature.

From 1737 onward, the Dean's public voice fell silent as he gradually lost his hearing, memory, and lucidity. In 1742, Swift suffered a stroke. He died on October 19, 1745, and was buried in Saint Patrick's Cathedral in Dublin.

Trans. Michelle Andressa Alvarenga de Souza

Notes

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2 Degree granted when a student's academic record failed to fully comply with the regulations in some minor respect.

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Bram Stoker and the Great Horror of Dracula

Sandra Guardini Vasconcelos

Photo: Public Domain

'No other fictional character has entered the human consciousness in quite the same way as Count Dracula. Tall, dark, occasionally caped, always fanged, Dracula has been both a figure of great horror and great humour, and everything in between. He's gone on to spawn a whole genre of fiction and innumerable films, and a book by Bram Stoker has never been out of print' (Philip Spedding, The London Library). Legends of blood-sucking creatures have existed around the world for thousands of years. But the vampire of modern times was born in 1819, with the publication of 'The Vampyre' by the English writer John William Polidori. Polidori's Lord Ruthven would much later find a female counterpart in Carmilla, the eponymous character of the 1872 gothic novella by Sheridan Le Fanu. Neither, however, have had the repercussion of Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897), a novel that has over time been adapted for the cinema and the theatre, for comics, games and short stories.

Novelist, poet and short-story writer, Abraham ('Bram') Stoker was born in Dublin on 8 November 1847 and died in London on 20 April 1912. A long and incapacitating childhood illness did not prevent him from obtaining an Honours Degree in Pure Mathematics at Trinity College. In his early years, he worked as a civil servant in Dublin Castle and due to his interest in the theatre started writing theatre

Bela Lugosi in Dracula (1931). Photo: Reproduction

reviews for the *Dublin Evening Mail*, an Irish newspaper co-owned by Sheridan Le Fanu. The quality of Stoker's reviews attracted attention and his favourable critical assessment of Henry Irving's *Hamlet* led both men to strike up a friendship which eventually got Stoker a job in London, as business manager of Irving's Lyceum Theatre, a post Stoker held for 27 years. It was after his move to London that he started writing novels and collaborating with the *Daily Telegraph*. During his lifetime, he published 3 collections of short stories, a series of articles and non-fiction, and 13 novels, many of them dealing with

empire-related topics. Yet, no work made him more famous than *Dracula*, which came out in 1897.

Over time, quite a number of widespread misconceptions about the novel have circulated that need dispelling. There is no evidence, for example, that Stoker was inspired by the story of a bloodthirsty fifteenth-century warlord from Wallachia, on the former Ottoman Empire and Christian Europe frontier, a certain Vlad the Impaler, also known as Dracula and famous for impaling his enemies upon stakes. As a matter of fact, Stoker 'probably found the name "Dracula" in the public library in Whitby (north Yorkshire) while on vacation with his wife' and son, in the summer of 1890. Stoker is said to have always claimed that his inspiration for the novel came from a nightmare, an origin not dissimilar to that of other famous Gothic novels, as was the case of *The Castle of Otranto*, by Horace Walpole, and *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley.

References in *Dracula* to plays put on at the Lyceum Theatre and Stoker's own foundational notes during his research for the book are reliable sources to give us a sense of the process of composition of the novel. Handwritten notes on the plot, which originally consisted of 4 parts, with a chapter-by-chapter outline – Book I: <Styria> Transylvania to London; Book II: Tragedy; Book III Discovery; Book 4: Punishment, are supplemented by a calendar of events, notes on landscape, vocabulary, local Whitby tales, vampires and vampirism, and extracts from a range of books which Stoker consulted possibly while he was a member of the London Library. A note jotted down by Stoker on 8 March 1890 contains the bare bones of the first chapters of the novel and suggests that a nightmare could have originated it: '[...] storm * arrive old castle – left in courtyard * driver disappears * Count appears – describe old dead man made alive * [...] Young man goes out * sees girls one tries * to kiss him not on the lips but throat * Old Count interferes – rage & fury diabolical – this man belongs to me I want him.' Jonathan Harker's own encounter with the three vampiric women, which he narrates in his journal entry for the night of 15 May (chapter III), seems to lend some credence to Stoker's claim about the seed from which the novel came into existence – its 'primal scene'.

The publication of his notes for *Dracula* in 2008 give evidence of what he was up to in between his several trips with Irving's theatre company, which may explain his habit of jotting ideas on any scrap of paper. It took 7 years for Stoker to complete the novel. According to David J. Skal, one of his biographers, Stoker had 'great difficulty writing it', in a process that 'was twisted, arduous, and constantly interrupted,' not only because he stopped to write other books, but also because he questioned and censored himself.

Together with Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* and Robert Louis Stevenson's *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, Bram Stoker's *Dracula* has become one of the three classic tales of terror in nineteenth-century England. As such, it deploys a number of Gothic conventions: the castle is a staple of Gothic fiction, as are the framing device, the aristocratic anti-hero and the sense of supernatural menace and impending doom that pervades the narrative. Mystery, suspense, eroticism, the monstrous feminine, body horror and various forms of violence are some of the elements that have made *Dracula* into the quintessential example of horror literature. Count Dracula features as the destructive machine, the active agent of chaos that disembarks in England to

Christopher Lee played Count Dracula in Hammer Horror's vampire series, including Horror of Dracula *(1958),* Prince of Darkness *(1966), and others.*
Photo: Reproduction

leave a trail of death behind him. The novel's *sui generis* method of storytelling is noteworthy, for relying on a medley of different types of texts — journal entries, letters, ship logs, newspaper clippings, telegrams — which result in an amalgam of voices and multiple perspectives, with Jonathan Harker's and Professor Van Helsing's standing out, as the two protagonists of the novel. As the prefacing note that precedes the narrative warns the reader, 'all the records chosen are exactly contemporary, given from the standpoints and within the range of knowledge of those who made them,' which challenges the sheer reliability of each one of these testimonials. In this kind of structure, Count Dracula, whose thoughts and feelings are never shared with the reader, remains a collaborative, collective construction – he is what the other characters make of him.

Dracula represents one pole in the long series of oppositions or polarities the story stands on: England vs. Transylvania; familiar vs. foreign; civilization vs. barbarism; day vs. night; human vs. animal; life vs. death; order vs. chaos; sanity vs. madness; science/rationality vs. superstition; natural vs. supernatural; West vs. East; civilization vs. barbarism, and so on. Dracula stands for the evil forces that threatens

Gary Oldman in Bram Stoker's Dracula *(1992).*
Photo: Reproduction

human life. He is the alien plague, the ancient figure that lands on the English shores bringing death with him, while Harker (the lawyer), Van Helsing (the polymath doctor) and Seward (the doctor), the voices of sanity and reason, are the representatives of modernity, with their resort to scientific techniques (blood transfusions) and cutting-edge technology (typewriter, shorthand, phonograph, telegram to confront and fight the threat he poses to all human beings.

Dracula embodies 'the fear of bourgeois civilization,' Victorian England's 'anxiety that the future will be monstrous.' He is the foreign power who comes to conquer London, to take possession of peoples' bodies and suck their blood. It is an infection, able to spread and 'create a new and ever-widening circle of semi-demons to batten on the helpless' (Chapter IV). As the Un-Dead, he has been invested with a number of different meanings: as a metaphor for capital, with its destructive potential, referring back to an analogy (vampire=capital) suggested by Karl Marx; as the invasive Other, the outsider who endangers civilisation; as an emblem of sexual energy, with his capacity to arouse women's sexual appetite (cf. Lucy Westenra) and disrupt the familial order.

Stephen Arata reads *Dracula* as a 'Gothic mirror that Stoker holds up to late-Victorian culture,' and argues that from the point of view of English-Irish politics its eponymous character embodies the 'anxiety of reverse colonization', that is, the primitive forces that threaten to overturn the progressive, scientific world of contemporary Britain. Dracula's defeat at the end of the novel is far from a comforting resolution, as the novel's dual conclusion suggests. Not only does Harker's Note at the end calls into question the documents' authenticity, but the risks that Dracula's existence entailed are far from warded off definitively.

With *Dracula* Bram Stoker created a myth and a novel of undying popularity.

Reading Further

Before seeing the film adaptations of Dracula, why don't you read the novel ? You won't regret it!

Notes

1 Bram Stoker, *Bram Stoker's Notes for* Dracula: *A Facsimile Edition,* annotated and transcribed by Robert Eighteen-Bisang and Elizabeth Miller. Jefferson, NC: Mc-Farland & Company, 2008, p. 4.

2 Bram Stoker was a member of the library between 1890 and 1897. A discovery made recently established 'beyond reasonable doubt that numerous books still on our shelves are the very copies that he was using to help write and research his masterpiece.' Cf. Philip Spedding, The Books that Made Dracula. https://www.londonlibrary.co.uk/dracula

3 Bram Stoker, *Bram Stoker's Notes for Dracula*, p. 17.

4 David J. Skal, Something in the Blood, Part 1. *The Paris Review*, October 27, 2016. https://www.theparisreview.org/blog/2016/10/27/something-blood-part-1/

5 Franco Moretti, Dialectic of Fear. *Signs Taken for Wonders*. On the Sociology of Literary Forms. London: Verso, 2005, pp. 83-84, respectively.

6 Moretti discusses this analogy at some length in the chapter mentioned in the previous note.

7 Stephen D. Arata, The Occidental Tourist: Dracula and the Anxiety of Reverse Colonization. *Victorian Studies*, Summer 1990, p. 621-645 (p. 639). The political implications of Stoker's novel are extensively dealt with by Arata.

James Joyce and the Perception of Real

Munira H. Mutran

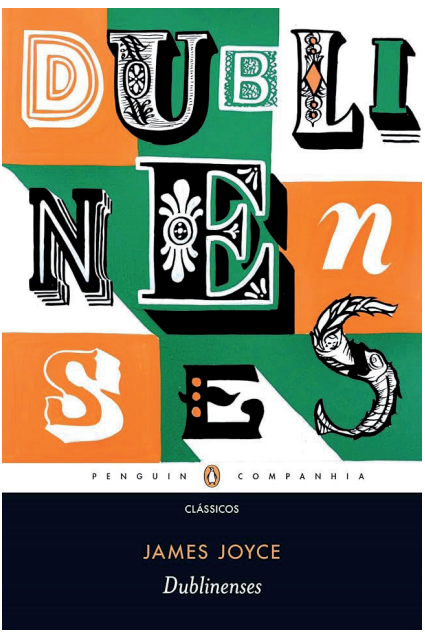
There are many ways to look at our world and then transform it into art. At the end of the nineteenth century, different methods of representing reality coexisted, the so-called –isms: Romanticism, Aestheticism, Realism, Naturalism, Decadentism, and Symbolism – all of them struggling for a place to survive. James Joyce (1882–1941), in his youth, experienced a transitional period between the end of the century's trends, that decisive moment defined by George Moore as 'the battle of the aesthetics,' described as follows:

> Thou wast in an hour of wonder and strange splendour when the last tints and lovelinesses of romance lingered in the deepening west; when out of the clear east rose with a mighty effulgence of colour and lawless light Realism; when showing aloft in the dead pallor of the zenith, like a white flag fluttering faintly, Symbolists and Decadents appeared. (George Moore [1888], 1972, p. 107)

While some writers hesitated between aesthetics, Moore chose the realism of Balzac, the rock on which to build his church. As for Yeats and Wilde, they embraced Symbolism and Myth to portray life through a veil or illuminated by a lamp, rather than a mirror.

James Joyce went far beyond his roots – he synthesized the major literary movements and drew upon all aesthetics. Beyond those, he incorporated music, painting, and cinema. *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916), his first novel, and *Ulysses* (1922), a novel that has occupied critics for over a century, illustrate the multiplicity of resources he used to retell Homer's *Odyssey* in 1904 Dublin; each episode of the epic is reimagined and transformed through translocation and transculturation, employing parody, a quintessential modern device. The Homeric parallel, however, is only one layer of the complexity of *Ulysses*, as the many allusions to art, history, philosophy, and literature of all eras, not to mention its linguistic experimentalism, make the flow of the reading experience challenging.

In a first encounter with Joyce, it is therefore advisable to adopt a chronological approach, beginning with *Dubliners* (1914), a collection of short stories that portray the shifts in his work which led to the major transformations in twentieth century fiction. The stories anticipate the narrative techniques that are later developed in more complex ways and introduce themes and characters that reappear in his novels.



The fifteen short stories in *Dubliners* share a sense of unity, yet each of them presents a particular moment in someone's life; the stories encompass the human condition

from childhood to middle age, and should be read in the order Joyce insisted on preserving.

Of all the characters in the collection, my favorite is Maria, from 'Clay.' Maria works at a laundry shop owned by Protestants, while she is a Catholic. She 'was a very, very small person indeed but she had a very long nose and a very long chin.' The description of her appearance is significant, as her smallness becomes symbolic and is emphasized throughout the story by references to her little bedroom, minute body, and tiny dress-boots. Despite her witch-like profile (a nod to Halloween on the night of the party), she is generous, kind, a true 'peace-maker,' always finding a way to resolve conflicts. In the seemingly simple narrative of a single day in Maria's life, there is a realistic layer that conceals allusions, symbolism, and myth. For instance, 'peace-maker' recalls Our Lady of Peace – Maria has the gift of restoring peace.

An original device for representing the life of every human being is the rhythm of highs and lows throughout the day in which Maria prepares for the party at her relatives' house. Happy, she eagerly awaits her evening off. Even more pleased after being praised for a job well done, she then feels sad when the ladies suggest she might find a husband at the party. Soon after, seeing the lit-up streets and joyful people, her cheer returns; she feels independent – she has her own money to buy sweets to bring to the party. But at the bakery, how hard it is to decide... The young, pretty, and elegant shop assistant, annoyed, asks whether she's shopping for a wedding cake. Sad again... On the next tram, a gentleman offers her a seat (the younger men pretend not to see her) and cheerfully chats with her. Delighted, Maria savors that moment; but upon her arrival, she realizes she was so distracted by the man's attention that the cake package was left behind on the tram. When reading the short story, it is worth identifying other highs and lows that appear throughout the narrative. In 'Clay', one of the most significant moments is the revelation instance – a feature found in all of the narratives; it occurs during a game of fortune-telling with the children, meant to hint at the future of those who, blindfolded, pick an object. A prayer book? A wedding ring? A

glass of water (a journey)? A book? Maria touches a saucer with 'a soft wet substance' – a prank played by the nephews. Everyone falls silent. It is then revealed to them, to the main character, and to the reader what is Maria's future – clay. Her joys and sorrows, her small triumphs and failures, symbolize the life of us all: the fate of Maria – so tiny – is death. We are made of clay, and to clay we shall return.

Translated by Priscila Borges Rodrigues

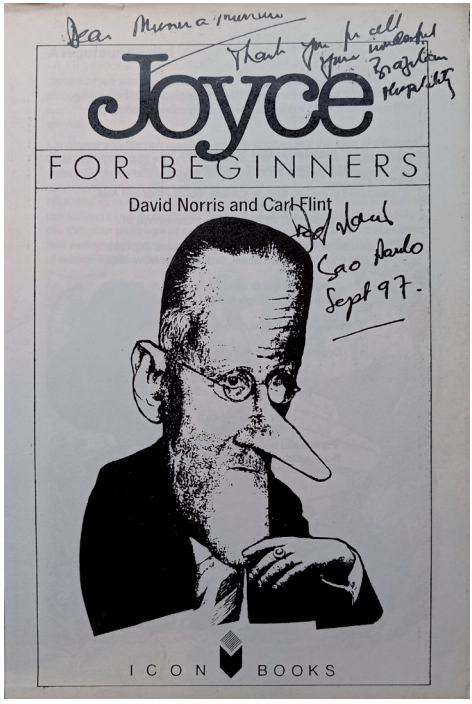


Photo: Personal archive

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The Near Absence of Women Writers in 18th and 19th-Century Irish Literature

Munira H. Mutran

Portrait of Maria Edgeworth (1808), by John Downman. Photo: Wikipedia Commons/ public domain

When considering Irish poetry and fiction from the 1700s and 1800s, one can clearly perceive the male omnipresence in contrast to the female absence. An example is how the figure of Jonathan Swift (1667–1745) – master of irony and satire and author of enduring works like *Gulliver's Travels* (1726), 'A Modest Proposal' (1729), and 'Directions to Servants' (1745) – cast a long shadow over the eighteenth century literary landscape. In all his writings, Swift exposed the stupidity and cruelty of the human condition. Beyond Swift, the presence of male poets and prose writers is extremely vast; not a single woman writer,

for instance, is mentioned in *A Literary History of Ireland* by Douglas Hyde, first published in 1899.

Irish fiction by women begins with the publication of *Castle Rackrent* in 1800 by Maria Edgeworth whose house served as the model for the novel's setting. She went on to write other Irish novels: *Ennui* (1809), *The Absentee* (1812) e *Ormond* (1817), which for the first time explore the Irish question, avoiding the romantic clichés of beautiful landscapes where 'colleens' live to the sound of harps and Celtic songs. The author is concerned with the political and social problems of a country colonized for centuries, while suggesting possible solutions to the ongoing debate between the Irish and the Anglo-Irish.

Two women writers in literary partnership emerged at the end of the 19th century with *The Real Charlotte* (1894), a brilliant panoramic novel that portrays the problems of Victorian Ireland. Its authors, Edith Somerville (1858–1949) and Violet Martin (1862–1915), adopted the pseudonym Somerville and Ross for this novel and their subsequent publications. They also employed irony and humor to depict Irish characters from the Anglo-Irish perspective, as in *Experiences of an Irish RM* (Resident Magistrate), published in 1890.

Despite the importance of the works of Edgeworth and Somerville and Ross, the 19th century was dominated by writers such as William Carleton (1794–1869), Gerald Griffin (1803–1840), and Charles Lever (1806–1872), who presented a faithful portrait of Irish society. Thus, *The Collegians* (1829) by Griffin was so well received that it was adapted for the stage under the title The *Colleen Bawn* (1860) by Dion Boucicault (1820–1890), actor and playwright. Boucicault wrote more than 180 plays. *The Shaughraun*, produced at the Abbey Theatre in 2004 and in London in 2005, was first performed in New York in 1874 and later in Scotland and Australia, proof of the lasting appeal of his melodramas.

In nineteenth-century fiction, two writers of mystery and supernatural stories must also be mentioned: Sheridan Le Fanu (1814–1873), known for *Carmilla* (1872), a gothic novella featuring

a vampire, and Bram Stoker (1847–1912), who explored horror in *Dracula* (1897).

Have you seen Francis Ford Coppola's film, Bram Stoker's Dracula (1992), starring Anthony Hopkins, Keanu Reeves, and Winona Ryder? Did you find the narrative relevant for our time? In what way? The Dracula written at the turn of the century was and remains a huge success.

Within the framework of the 19th century, it is essential to mention the poetry and the influential roles of Samuel Ferguson (1810–1886) and James Clarence Mangan (1803–1849) in the work of 20th-century authors. Inspired by Irish folklore and heroic cycles, Ferguson wrote epic poems and verse plays such as Deirdre, a work reinterpreted and rewritten not only by early twentieth-century writers but also by later ones. Mangan, regarded by James Joyce as 'the most distinguished poet of the Celtic world', inspired the Irish Literary Revival headed by W. B. Yeats, Edward Martyn, George Moore—and, at last, by a woman.

Lady Augusta Gregory (1852-1932), author of comedies such as *Hyacinth Halvey* (1906), *The Rising of the Moon* (1907), and *The Workhouse Ward* (1908), as well as historical plays, tragicomedies, and tragedies, and co-author with Yeats of *Cathleen Ní Houlihan* and *Deirdre* (1906). The reference made by Yeats to Lady Gregory in his Nobel Prize acceptance speech in 1923 is

a tribute not only to her dramatic work but also – and above all – to her tireless collaboration throughout his career as a writer. Other significant references to Lady Gregory appear in the autobiography of Yeats, *The Trembling of the Veil*, in which the poet recounts how she always strove to support his creative work at the house in Coole Park, where they would engage in dialogue and debate about the aesthetic principles of theater-making. Alongside Yeats, Lady Gregory worked to recover Irish legends, myths, and folklore, and to shape a new theater grounded in tradition.

One of her finest plays, *Grania* (1912), is based on the classic and tragic love triangle of Irish legend; her version reveals a deep understanding of the complexities of love between younger and older individuals. According to Lady Gregory, her heroine was resolute and, on two occasions, shaped her life with her own hands. In *Grania*, thus, there is a commentary on a woman's longing for the freedom to fight for control over her own destiny.

Maria Edgeworth's house, used as a model for Castle Rackrent (1800). In Augustin *Martin's* Anglo-Irish Literature. *Department of Foreign Affairs, Government of Ireland, 1980, p. 18. Photo: Personal archive.*

The Tradition of Female Voice in Irish Literature: Elizabeth Bowen

Few women stood out in nineteenth-century literature. Regarding drama, female participation began with the work of Lady Augusta Gregory in the early twentieth century. In fiction, the first major short story writer and novelist was Elizabeth Bowen (1899–1973), who wrote nine novels and seventy-nine short stories; due to these narratives, Bowen became one of the pillars of the modern Irish short story.

Among her novels, such as *The House in Paris* (1935), *The Death of The Heart* (1938), *A World of Love* (1954) and *The Little Girls* (1964), which have inspired some contemporary novelists, *The Last September* (1929) stands out for its themes of innocence and experience, the search for identity, the awakening of love and its complications, and, above all, for portraying the historical moments leading up to the Civil War (1922–1923) from the Anglo-Irish point of view.

In a country house that plays a decisive role in the unfolding of the plot, Lord and Lady Naylor, with whom their orphaned teenage niece lives, receive visits from neighbors, friends, and relatives for tea, parties and balls, games and outings. On the surface, nothing seems to happen that summer and early autumn. In the festive atmosphere, the characters enjoy themselves in contrast to the harsh reality of the Irish servants and small landowners – originally the rightful owners of the land but now subject to the Crown – who live in poverty and rebellion. The frequent signs of conflict that anticipate

the Civil War are ignored by the guests and residents of the mansion. Increasingly isolated, they talk about the new autumn collections in Paris, comment that the tennis court isn't what it used to be, and other trivial matters. Maintaining emotional balance is urgent as they face the political crisis of 1920, never once mentioning the violence of the conflicts. Everyone is committed to pretending nothing is happening, but arrests, ambushes, and the burning of neighboring mansions signal that the end is near. Even so, preparations for the grand ball continue, a ball which is abruptly interrupted by tragic events. The novel closes in a late-winter landscape, with the house and gardens destroyed by fire.

In addition to her novel, which holds great literary and documentary value, it is necessary to highlight one of Bowen's short stories in order to better assess the merit of her work. I have chosen 'The Demon Lover' (1945) for its originality and modernity. Translated into Portuguese as 'O Amante Demônio', the text is a rewriting of a traditional ballad about a young woman who abandons her husband and small children to run away with her lover on a ship with golden masts and silk sails to see the lilies on a hillside in Italy. She soon discovers that the lover is the devil: growing monstrously large, he destroys the golden masts and casts the unfortunate woman into the depths of the sea, into hell.

The blend of horror and supernatural elements recalls Le Fanu and Bram Stoke; furthermore, the figure of the satanic lover also appears in the collection organized by Walter Scott, *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* (1802-1803).

'The Demon Lover' was adapted for a 1986 TV episode of 'Shades of Darkness', starring Dorothy Tutin as Mrs. Katheleen Drover . Foto: Reproduction.

Listen to:

Spotify link: The London Philharmonic produced a performance of The Three Border Ballads, which includes *'The Demon Lover'* —

https://open.spotify.com/track/4H4DeyW2l6p0RKgoe6PSIK?si=NuNSMimtRBWEg_IXJVBsBQ]

In the 1945 narrative, however, Bowen deals with the mystery and horror provoked by the satanic figure, exploring ambiguities that lead the reader to experience both astonishment and suspense, while also considering the possibility that it was nothing but the imagination of Mrs. Drover: the blend of illusion and reality as a result of the sinister atmosphere of wartime London during the period from 1941 to 1944. In the preface to the collection where 'The Demon Lover' appears, the author states that the stories from that time reflect a growing wave of hallucinations and the lucid abnormality of the atmosphere produced by the war.

The story can therefore be read in the lines of the supernatural ballad, Bowen's source of inspiration, revealing the terror of a malevolent spirit that haunts the life of a poor, unremarkable middle-aged woman; conversely, the narrative can be interpreted as a psychological study of someone under the impact of bombings and the fear of death. With a concise and suggestive style, Bowen sustains the ambiguity until the – surprising – end, leaving the reader intrigued.

Translated by Priscila Borges Rodrigues

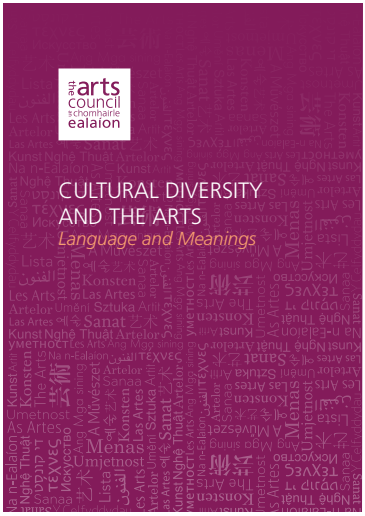
Race and Immigration in Contemporary Irish Literature

Victor Pacheco

Driven by economic growth in the 1990s, the arrival of immigrants changed the characteristics of Irish society, which until then had defined itself as predominantly monoracial. As can be seen in the most recent census, 12% of the Irish population is made up of immigrants, with the United Kingdom, Poland, Lithuania, Romania, Latvia, Brazil, Spain, Italy, and India being the ten nationalities with the highest number of migrants in the country (Central Statistics Office, 2022).

Ireland and Brazil: a cultural dialogue

To accommodate different cultures, the Irish government has adopted interculturalism. This practice consists of promoting dialogue and interaction between cultures, going beyond simply accepting the coexistence of multiple cultures in a society, and thus attempting to prevent segregation.



In 2010, the Irish Arts Council launched the pamphlet *Cultural Diversity and the Arts — Language and Meanings* (https://diversityarts.org.au/app/uploads/Cultural-Diversity-pamphlet.pdf), showing that interculturalism was the central focus for the promotion of culture and the arts in the Irish context.

This shift also changed the course of Irish literature. Spanish researchers Luz Mar González-Arias, Marisol Morales Ladrón, and Asier Asier Altuna-García de Salazar (2010, pp. 161-164) suggested a taxonomy of fictional writing about migration consisting of three categories: 'the racialization of the Irish,' through links to the country's migratory past and the current Celtic Tiger; 'the white perspective or the perspective from without,' which are works by Irish writers representing immigrants; and 'the racial/ethnic perspective from within,' the literature produced by the immigrants themselves.

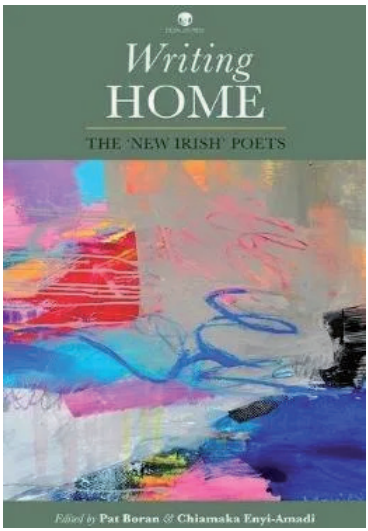
Find out more about the Irish population profile here.
bit.ly/3IYgQOQ

Have you ever considered living in Ireland? The Irish Immigration Service website provides all the necessary information for this process. Visit : **<https://www.irishimmigration.ie/br/>**

The first two categories, 'the racialization of the Irish' and 'the perspective from without,' blur, as there is more literary production by white authors. Notable authors include Lia Mills, Chris Binchy, Hugo Hamilton, Kevin Barry, Gerard Donovan, Marian Keyes, Sebastian Barry, Roddy Doyle, Colum McCann, Joseph O'Connor, Mary O'Donnell, Éilís Ní Dhuibhne, Bernard MacLaverty, Frank McGuinness, Donal Ryan, Oona Frawley, and Roísin O'Donnell, who represented in their works the new social condition and life of immigrants in Ireland.

Immigrants began to be included in anthologies, such as *Dublin: Ten Journeys, One Destination* (2010), featuring the short stories by Nigerian-Irish writers Ifedinma Dimbo ('Grafton Street of Dublin') and Melatu Okorie ('Shackles').

Since 2010, there has been a significant increase in writers bringing new cultural contexts to Irish literature. It is also important to mention the anthology *Writing Home: The 'New Irish' Poets*, edited by Pat Boran and Chiamaka Enyi-Amadi.



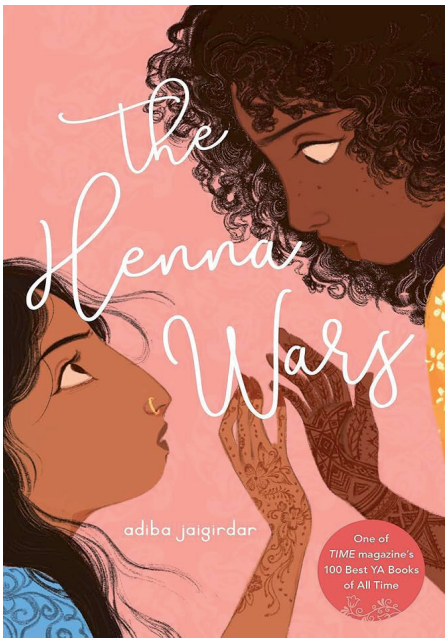
Published in 2019, the book has poems by immigrants and naturalized Irish citizens from countries such as Angola, Saudi Arabia, Congo, India, Iraq, Jamaica, Japan, Nigeria, Pakistan, Poland, Romania, Russia, Ukraine, Vietnam, and Zimbabwe. The collection also features poems by Brazilian Rafael Mendes.

Rafael Mendes is a Brazilian-Irish migrant whose work has recently appeared or is upcoming in *Poetry Ireland Review, Propel Magazine,* and *Poetry Salzburg Review*. He was featured in Poetry Ireland Introduction

Series in 2023 and was awarded the 2023 Irish Writers Centre/ Tyrone Guthrie Centre Lacuna Bursary. He is a PhD candidate in Latin American Studies at Trinity College Dublin.

Names such as Adiba Jaigirdar, Chiamaka Enyi-Amadi, Dagogo Hart, Kit de Waal, Landa wo, Mary Watson, Ridhi Zak/Aria Eipe, Oein DeBhairduin, Ola Majekodunmi, and Melatu Okorie, to name a few, have gained notoriety in recent years for questioning paradigms of national identity and belonging and representing the racism and xenophobia experienced by immigrants.

Two novels by Adiba Jaigirdar have been translated into Portuguese: *Pegas de Surpresa* [*The Hennah Wars*] (2023) and *Guia do namoro falso* [*Hani and Ishu's Guide to Fake Dating*] (2025).



The increase and inclusion of immigrant artists stimulate new perceptions of Irishness and Irish culture beyond interculturalism, also influencing the configuration of the literary canon.

With the initiative of small publishers dedicated to publishing authors who bring new perspectives on contemporary Ireland, it is possible to see a certain diversification in both the publishing market and the narrative and poetic possibilities.

These new possibilities for poetic and literary creation are made possible by the practices of spoken poetry and slams, which are also common here in Brazil. Spoken poetry creates open poetic

spaces for other types of subjects and bodies, rejecting the format and pattern of academic intellectuality and the canonical tradition formed mainly by white men.

One of the leading names is the Nigerian-Irish poet, playwright, and performer Felicia Olusanya, better known by her stage name, FeliSpeaks. Since 2020, FeliSpeaks has been a member of the board of directors of Poetry Ireland, responsible for promoting Irish poetry nationally and internationally. In 2022, she was awarded the best performance category at the Dublin Fringe Festival.

Her poem 'For Our Mothers' was featured in the English Ordinary Level Leaving Cert Curriculum. Watch FeliSpeaks recite 'For Our Mothers' here: ***bit.ly/felispeaks***

Note

1 Postdoctoral researcher at the University of São Paulo. This study was financed, in part, by the São Paulo Research Foundation (FAPESP), Brazil. Process Number 2020/03891-7 and Process Number nº 2024/21633-6.

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Irish Poetry: A Gateway to History

Viviane Carvalho da Annunciação

Albert Memorial in Belfast, Northern Ireland.
Photo: Picryl, public domain.

After the Second World War, the German critic Theodor Adorno famously said, 'To write a poem after Auschwitz is barbaric.' It's a shocking statement, but what he meant is worth thinking about: how can poetry exist after something as horrific as the Holocaust? Can art ever truly represent such pain and destruction? This idea reveals a deep contradiction within poetry itself. On the one hand, poetry allows people to express personal struggles and emotions. On the other hand, it can only do so through language – and language is not just personal, it is shaped by the society we live in.

In other words, poetry is both individual and social. It captures private thoughts and feelings, but those thoughts are always filtered through the words and meanings that society has given us. This is especially true for Irish and Northern Irish poetry. Reading poems

opens a window not just into one person's mind, but into a whole culture, with its history, traditions, politics and struggles. The beauty of poetry is that it can do all this while also creating powerful new images and ideas.

To explore the relationship between the individual, language, and society, take a close look at the poem 'Belfast Confetti' by Ciaran Carson. Even if you do not know much about the history of Ireland and Northern Ireland – about their centuries of conflict, colonisation and division, you can still feel the intensity and confusion in the poem. Carson shows us what it is like to be caught in the middle of a riot, not by describing it directly, but by using grammar and punctuation in surprising ways. His language becomes fragmented and chaotic, mirroring the violence on the streets. But here is the big question: is language 'enough' to describe this kind of fear and confusion? Or does it actually break down when things get too intense?

This is one of the powerful ideas behind 'Belfast Confetti' – and behind poetry in general. Sometimes, words seem too limited to express trauma. Other times, they are all we have. The poem challenges us to think about how we use language to make sense of chaos, and whether it can ever truly capture the reality of conflict. So, as you read the poem, ask yourself: when someone is caught in a moment of fear or crisis, can poetry give voice to their experience – or does it simply highlight the limits of what words can do?

Loyalist protest , Belfast. Photo: Joshua Hayes/Flickr/ Creative Commons.

Belfast Confetti

by Ciaran Carson

Suddenly as the riot squad moved in it was raining exclamation marks,
Nuts, bolts, nails, car-keys. A fount of broken type. And the explosion.
Itself – an asterisk on the map. This hyphenated line, a burst of rapid fire ...
I was trying to complete a sentence in my head, but it kept
stuttering,
All the alleyways and side streets blocked with stops and colons.

I know this labyrinth so well – Balaklava, Raglan, Inkerman,
Odessa Street – Why can't I escape? Every move is punctuated. Crimea Street. Dead end again.
A Saracen, Kremlin-2 mesh. Makrolon face-shields. Walkie-
talkies. What is
My name? Where am I coming from? Where am I going?
A fusillade of question-marks.

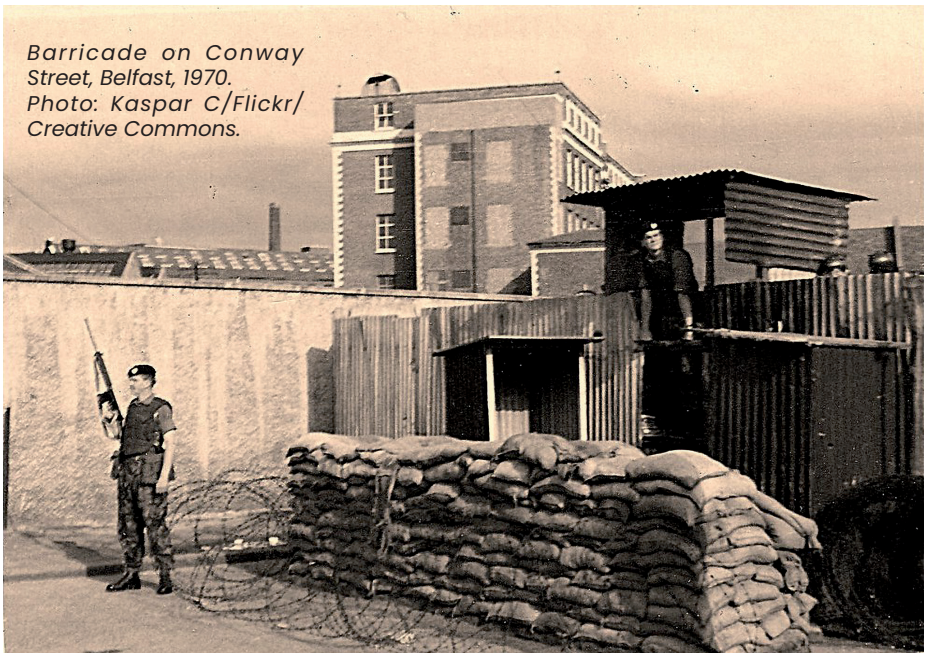
If you said that grammar helps the poet make sense of a riot, you are absolutely right. In 'Belfast Confetti', poet Ciaran Carson uses punctuation marks to represent the chaos of a street riot in Belfast. But rather than describing the violence directly – no screaming crowds or bombs exploding – he turns to metaphor to show what's going on inside his mind. The poem captures the psychological confusion and fear the speaker feels in the middle of a violent event.

As the streets become unfamiliar, cars pushed out of place, bins scattered, normal life completely disrupted, Carson uses punctuation not just as symbols of pauses or hesitation, but for their 'visual' effect. A comma might look like a crouched body; a full stop like a wheel. These

small marks on a page turn into symbols of panic and movement. By the end of the poem, a 'fusillade of question marks' shows that the speaker does not understand what is happening around him. These questions represent more than confusion – they reflect the complexity of identity, history and language in a place like Belfast.

Even though 'Belfast Confetti' feels very personal, it is also deeply political. The poem presents a city broken by conflict, which connects to Ireland's long history of colonisation, war and division. Starting in the 1500s, English rulers like Henry VIII tried to conquer and control Ireland.

Gaelic traditions were replaced by English ones, and land that was once shared communally was turned into privately leased property through large-scale plantations. Over the centuries, this created deep divides across the country.



Barricade on Conway Street, Belfast, 1970. Photo: Kaspar C/Flickr/ Creative Commons.

Shankill Road in Belfast during the Troubles in the 1970s. Photo: Fribbler/Wikimedia Commons.

In 1922, most of Ireland became independent with the Anglo-Irish Treaty – but the North, where Belfast is, remained part of the United Kingdom. This split did not just create two political systems but two very different cultural identities. The South began shaping a national Irish identity based on shared heritage, while the North remained more fractured and uncertain – just like the confusing symbols in Carson's poem. His 'confetti' is not joyful; it is chaotic, like leftover fragments of an explosion and these fragments leaves us, the readers, with more questions than answers.

While Carson focuses on the disorder and mental disorientation caused by conflict, another Northern Irish poet, Seamus Heaney, chooses a slightly different path. His poems are filled with emotion, solidarity and human connection. So, when you read 'Summer 1969', think about this: if a poem about painting can be political, how does Heaney use language, images and literary references to show that 'the personal is political'?

Summer 1969 (1972)
by Seamus Heaney

While the Constabulary covered the mob
Firing into the Falls, I was suffering
Only the bullying sun of Madrid.
Each afternoon, in the casserole heat
Of the flat, as I sweated my way through
The life of Joyce, stinks from the fishmarket
Rose like the reek off a flax-dam.
At night on the balcony, gules of wine,
A sense of children in their dark corners,
Old women in black shawls near open windows,
The air a canyon rivering in Spanish.
We talked our way home over starlit plains
Where patent leather of the Guardia Civil
eamed like fish-bellies in flax-poisoned waters.
Go back,' one said, 'try to touch the people.'
Another conjured Lorca from his hill.
We sat through death-counts and bullfight reports
On the television, celebrities
Arrived from where the real thing still happened.
I retreated to the cool of the Prado.
Goya's 'Shootings of the Third of May'
Covered a wall—the thrown-up arms
And spasm of the rebel, the helmeted
And knapsacked military, the efficient
Rake of the fusillade. In the next room,
His nightmares, grafted to the palace wall—

Seamus Heaney, during an event in 1996 / Photo: Wikimedia Commons

Dark cyclones, hosting, breaking; Saturn
Jewelled in the blood of his own children,
Gigantic Chaos turning his brute hips
Over the world. Also, that holmgang
Where two berserks club each other to death
For honour's sake, greaved in a bog, and sinking
He painted with his fists and elbows, flourished
The stained cape of his heart as history charged.

Instead of using punctuation to symbolise history, Seamus Heaney draws on references from literature, art, and wider historical events to build meaning in his poem. He connects two distant places – Madrid and Belfast – to explore questions of identity and belonging. By placing his hometown side-by-side with the city he is visiting, Heaney's poetic voice reflects on what it means to feel connected to multiple places at once. This sense of divided loyalty is expressed through the way he reimagines what place means, both personally and politically.

The poem plays with sounds, especially alliteration using hard (plosive) and soft (sibilant) consonants, to create rhythm and tension. But the playful rhythm is suddenly interrupted by the phrase 'bullying sun,' a powerful image that shows the poet trying to come to terms with conflicting emotions. Heaney's view of Belfast, particularly his reference to Falls Road (a symbol of Catholic, nationalist identity), shows that even though he is far away, his thoughts and feelings remain firmly rooted in Northern Ireland.

Heaney also brings in literary history by referencing James Joyce, a major figure in Irish writing – such as Shakespeare in the United Kingdom or Machado de Assis in Brazil. Heaney mentions a fish market, which connects back to Joyce's *Ulysses*, especially the 'Cyclops' episode where the main character, Leopold Bloom, experiences xenophobia. In this way, the market is not just in Madrid, it reminds us of Dublin too, and the tensions within it. When Heaney refers to the 'flax-dam,' he's also nodding to Belfast's linen industry, blending these three cities, Madrid, Dublin, and Belfast into one poetic world.

Heaney continues to link Spain and Northern Ireland through his mention of the Spanish poet Federico García Lorca, who became a source of inspiration for his own poetry. Lorca was executed during the Spanish Civil War, and this violence echoes the conflict back home in Northern Ireland. The images from television news and Heaney's discomfort with watching bullfighting make him question where real suffering is happening and what his role should be as a witness and an artist.

At the end, he finally turns to the paintings of Francisco Goya, like 'The Third of May 1808' and 'The Colossus', as powerful ways to capture war's brutality. For Heaney, art and poetry are not just ways to tell stories about conflict – they become part of the struggle itself. By bringing together personal memory, political violence and great works of art, Heaney shows how poetry can build bridges between different countries and histories – and offer a deeper understanding of the world.

But how can poetry stay relevant in a world that's constantly changing? Read Leontia Flynn's poem and think about this question:

Belfast (2008)

By Leontia Flynn

The sky is a washed out-theatre backcloth
behind new façades on old baths and gasworks;
downtown, under the green sails of their scaffolding
a dozen buildings' tops steer over the skyline.
Belfast is finished and Belfast is under construction.
What was mixed grills and whiskeys (cultureless, graceless, leisureless) is now concerts and walking tours (Friendly! Dynamic! Various!)
A tourist pamphlet contains an artist's impressions
Of arcades, mock-colonmades, church spires, and tapas bars;
are those harsh attempts at a buyable beauty?
There are 27 McDonald's, you say, in Northern Ireland
(but what am I supposed to do with this information?).
A match at Winsor Park has fallen in Gay Pride week.
At two a.m. the street erupts in noise.
I listen as 'We are the Billy Boys'
Gets mixed up, four doors down, with 'Crazy' by Patsy Cline.
And gathering in the city's handful of bars,
Not sunk in
darkness or swathed in beige leatherette
men are talking of Walter Benjamin, and about 'Grand Narratives'
which they seek to 'fracture' and 'interrogate'.

Leontia Flynn's poem 'Belfast' paints a lively and complex picture of the city by breaking it down into small, vivid scenes that feel like snapshots of everyday life. She begins with a wide-angle view, showing Belfast at a moment of change in the early twenty-first century: a time full of contradictions. In the first stanza, the sky becomes a backdrop for construction work, setting the tone for a city caught between its past and its future. The second stanza captures the hectic energy of tourism and commercialization, using playful language, parentheses and punctuation to add irony and humour. Brackets and punctuation marks ask serious questions too. For example, the phrase 'new façades on old baths' suggests that shiny updates are being slapped onto crumbling traditions. Later, the poem wonders what to do with things like 'mixed grills and whiskeys.' Are they outdated, or do they still matter? The explanation in parentheses calls them 'cultureless, graceless, leisureless,' but it is not clear if Flynn agrees or is poking fun. These contradictions show how renovating the city also means turning its past into something to be sold – something to be marketed like any other product.

Flynn puts it bluntly: 'Belfast is finished and Belfast is under construction.' The city's attempt to preserve its history while building something new mirrors how some cities try to turn their past into a tourist attraction. When the past becomes a brand, it risks losing its meaning. The tone shifts in the next stanzas, as Flynn introduces pop culture, parades, football games and even McDonald's. Her language becomes more casual, filled with local slang and humour. She does not glorify or pity Belfast – she jokes about it. While she starts by entertaining the idea of making the city's history more 'sellable,' by the middle of the poem she seems to reject this. Instead, she embraces a

Bridge in Belfast.
Photo: Public Domain

voice that respects tradition without turning it into a product. Her use of irony reflects her attempt to show the real Belfast – not the polished version found in tourist brochures. Her humour, or 'banter,' is both funny and serious, capturing a core trait of the city's people. Flynn's Belfast invites readers to connect in their own way – whether they are football fans, queer, academic or something else entirely. In the end, Flynn leaves us with questions rather than answers, suggesting that poetry is built by the people who live in it.

By exploring these poems, we begin to understand how poetry 'can' survive even after events as devastating as wars and riots. In fact, poetry does not just survive – it offers us new ways to express complex ideas, deep emotions, and even a sense of place. It shows us that language, while sometimes limited, can still be powerful.

Poetry acts as both a challenge 'to' fixed opinions and a kind of medicine 'for' them. It pushes us to think differently, to question what we take for granted, and to imagine other perspectives. More than anything, poetry gives us a space to be creative and explore emotions that might be hard to explain in everyday language, and to connect with others across time, place, and culture. In this way, poetry becomes more than just words on a page. It becomes a form of resistance, a tool for understanding, and a source of hope. It reminds

us that, even in the aftermath of trauma, human imagination still has the power to rebuild and reimagine the world.

Do you know that...?

'Sunday Bloody Sunday', the song by Irish band U2 relate to the Civil War in Northern Ireland? The U2 song 'Sunday Bloody Sunday' was inspired by the massacre in Londonderry/ Derry, Northern Ireland, in 1972.

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Redefining Irish Poetry in the Twenty-First Century

Gisele Giandoni Wolkoff

The second half of the twentieth century witnessed the redefinition of Western societies – and not only those – around the axis of production and the new dynamics that emerged in the aftermath of the end of the Second World War in 1945. In the case of the Republic of Ireland, Éire, the 1950s and 1960s were decades of profound change.

In literature specifically, this period saw the emergence of names that would become prominent over the following decades, as well as movements that began to destabilize what had been traditionally understood as literary tradition, flourishing in the years to come – especially through the work of many women writers in the Republic of Ireland. In the field of poetry, the pioneering figure of this movement of women writers is Eavan Boland, whose first book,

23 Poems, appeared in 1962. This marked the beginning of a prolific literary rendering of the female condition in the country, which had long been confined to domestic spaces and the private sphere, in contrast to men, whose writing centered on public experiences—often discrediting lyricism as a lesser form, even within poetry itself.

With a global outlook and a degree from Trinity College Dublin, Boland was a contemporary of fellow poet Derek Mahon and engaged in poetic dialogue with several other writers, including Patrick Kavanagh and Seamus Heaney, as well as canonical figures in English literature such as T. S. Eliot. To write oneself (as a woman) into literature, to respond to tradition, and to make space for other women to also join the ranks of Ireland's national writers seem to have been Eavan Boland's central purposes. She has served as an inspiration to generations of women writers who emerged from her creative writing workshops and continued to do so in the decades that followed. Many of them can be briefly explored in the digital anthology compiled by Chris Murray (see references). Here, we will focus on a few who have been published in Brazilian Portuguese translations and featured in interviews on the YouTube channel of the *W.B. Yeats Chair.*

The first writer we refer to is Mary O'Donnell. Initially self-published, as in the first edition of *September Elegies* (2003), O'Donnell navigates themes ranging from the many forms of love to aging, the female relationship with the body, and an ongoing dialogue with the male literary tradition. Her poetry often centers around themes such as women's identity, motherhood, being a daughter or a lover, and confronting loss throughout life, among others.

The Ulster-born poet, in addition to works such as *The Ark Builders, September Elegies, Spiderwoman's Third Avenue Rhapsody, Storm over Belfast*, and *Unlegendary Heroes*, also works as a translator, critic, and novelist. One of her best-known novels is the bestseller *The Light-Makers*.

In Brazilian Portuguese, O'Donnell's work appears in anthologies such as *Onde Estão Os Pássaros* (2023), A*merican Plural Voices* (2015),

and *Poem-ing Beyond Border: ten contemporary Irish and Portuguese women poets* (2011), from which we have selected the following poem:

After

There are no instructions.
There is no correct way of finishing.

Here are the hats, the ties,
suits he wore. See here, the shoes,
rows of them gleaming
when the wardrobe is open
and the sun dances down
the field to the east.

No one tidies here. No one removes.
The poor will not benefit.
Even the human odour of clothes
fades. No mystery to this.
Time does the work.

(apud Wolkoff, 2011: 152)

Searching further

Themes similar to those explored by O'Donnell and Boland also appear in the poetry and diverse works of writers Eiléan Ní Chuilleanáin, Anne Le Marquand Hartigan (who is also a painter) and Kerry Hardie. How about taking a look at their work?

Eiléan Ní Chuilleanáin

Among the writers whose work has been translated in Brazil and studied by researchers at the *W.B. Yeats Chair* are Moya Cannon, Eiléan Ní Chuilleanáin, Celia de Fréine, and Catherine Phil MacCarthy. Celia de Fréine, in addition to being a playwright, essayist, translator, and screenwriter, is also a poet. The *W.B. Yeats Chair* has conducted more than two interviews with her; one for the program 'Poetry at Midday') and another titled 'Interviewing Celia de Fréine,' published in the *Abei Journal* (see references). Lyricism is a striking feature of her writing. Observe how this is expressed in the following poem:

Dear Friend

Ignore the lightning flashes that illuminate
the labels that say who we are and where

we are going. We will know that only when
we reach there and are enveloped

by the strangeness of what we never knew
Those who read those labels think

that they know what's in store for us,
but only we ourselves can open our cases.

Tonight my packet of teabags is almost empty,
your treatment almost done. As soon as the storm

passes we can unpack the future and watch
the sun rise on our calendar of expectation.

(*apud* Wolkoff, 2011, p. 124)

Finally, the interplay between lyricism and its relationship with the environment, nature, and the human experience emerges in the poetry of Catherine Phil MacCarthy, as we can read in poems such as:

Native Trees

Yesterday she sent the mountain side,
all pink flannel flowers and shrubby greens

flowing for miles to the valley, far as
the eye can see; the understory,

a woodland taken root, after wild fires
of last summer reached a pine

at the bottom of the garden, crackled
along the fence through undergrowth

and threatened the house. Down the road
the community fled stifling heat; blinded

with smoke they struggled to breathe;
returned to charred stumps of trees,

the hinterland, a smouldering desert,
a blackened ruin of foul embers

and bitter tears. Here, plants not seen
for years germinate from seed and pollen,

after nestling a lifetime in the forest,
break dormancy in warm sunlight,

sprout ferny leaves and blooms;
soften the wounded earth with myrtle

and gum saplings, counter human failings
and greed with a wilderness of native

trees, have us dream of the paradise
given; our abundant heaven.

(MacCarthy, 2024, pp.24-26)

We hope that this overview of contemporary poets will inspire further readings about contemporary poetry, which seems renewed and redefined in the twenty-first century as a continuation of what was initiated in the second half of the wentieth century. For this purpose, we also recommend the special issue of the journal *Cadernos de Literatura em Tradução* 27, dedicated to Ireland, which was digitally launched and is available on the FFLCH/USP YouTube channel, titled 'The Many Maps of Ireland,' as referenced below.

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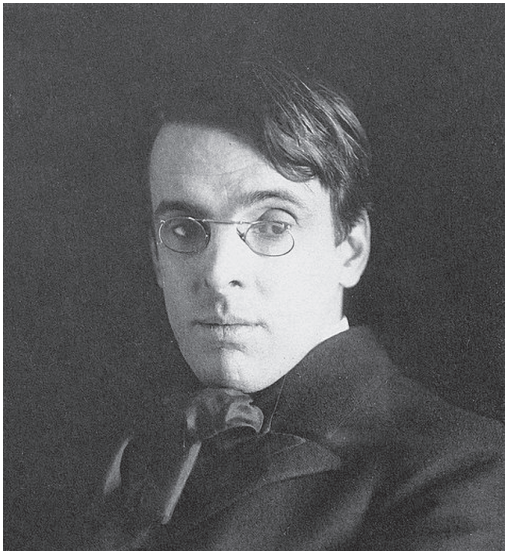
3. THEATRE AND CINEMA

Cathleen Ní Houlihan, by W. B. Yeats: A *Call to Nationalism*

Munira H. Mutran



When discussing the 1916 Easter Rising on page 53 of this volume, Camila Franco Batista uses as one of her subtitles the phrase 'a terrible beauty is born', that refers to the revolutionary conflict depicted in one of Yeats's poems, 'Easter 1916', in which the beauty of the rebels' self-sacrifice is intertwined with the horror of war. The final passage celebrates the heroes of the Insurrection:

To know they dreamed and are dead;
And what if excess of love
Bewildered them till they died?
I write it out in a verse –
MacDonagh and MacBride
And Connolly and Pearse
Now and in time to be,
Wherever green is worn,
Are changed, changed utterly:
A terrible beauty is born.

(Yeats, 1992, p. 91)

Long before that poem, Yeats wrote the one-act play ***Cathleen Ní Houlihan***, with a nationalist tone. Although he supported cultural nationalism (as did Oscar Wilde's parents), the young poet offered, in the 1902 play, a violent solution against the invader.

The importance of W. B. Yeats in the Irish literary scene

Poet, playwright, critic, and author of a large body of letters, diaries, and autobiographies that shaped the cultural moment in which he lived (1865–1939), Yeats was also one of the founders of the Irish Literary Theatre, a cultural initiative aimed at promoting the tradition of Irish legends and sagas.

From what point of view should Yeats be approached?

He is most revered as a poet who received the Nobel Prize in 1923; however, his playwriting holds immense documentary and literary value. The multiplicity of his interests shared a unified purpose, as expressed in his essays and autobiographies, but the wide range of his work makes it difficult to choose a single angle, be it poetry, theatre, or criticism. As a result, Yeats is generally approached in a selective way.

Maud Gonne, who played Cathleen Ní Houlihan at St. Teresa's Hall (1902).

Consequently, from Yeats's dramatic work, we have chosen *Cathleen Ní Houlihan*, in which the conflicts between the colonized and the colonizer, already discussed in other texts in this volume, are present.

Cathleen Ní Houlihan was performed by an amateur cast on April 2, 1902, at St Teresa's Hall. The role of Cathleen, played by Maud Gonne – an ardent activist and nationalist, one of the most beautiful women of her time, for whom Yeats held a lifelong passion – was crucial to the play's success. A regular theatre-goer, Joseph Holloway, wrote in his diary that the actress who portrayed the mysterious Cathleen – Maud Gonne – tall and slender, deserved much applause 'for her speeches full of patriotic feeling' (Hogan, 1967, 17).

Ultimately, who is Cathleen Ní Houlihan?

The Gaelic poem translated by poet James Clarence Mangan – which probably inspired Yeats – describes the life of a weary and sorrowful people, without a home, without an altar, exiled from their own homeland. The arrival of a poor and helpless old woman inspires the young to fight for her, who in the end transforms into a queen due to the sacrifice of her sons.

The 1902 Cathleen

In a small house in the west of Ireland, in 1798, a family prepares for the wedding of Michael, the eldest son, the following day. Everyone is very happy: the young lovers dream of their new home and the arrival of children; the father plans to buy a piece of land with the dowry money; Patrick, the youngest brother, thinks about the greyhound puppy Michael's bride promised him. They are interrupted

by a clamour outside; an old mysterious woman enters the house and complains about the 'strangers' who have taken her 'four beautiful green fields.' She refuses milk, bread, and money. She seeks help to reclaim her “four beautiful green fields.”

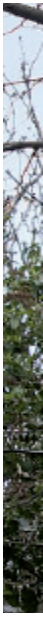
Michael is overcome with compassion and promises to help her. Ignoring the pleas of his mother and bride, he abandons his family and future, and follows Cathleen. From the window, Patrick watches them walk away and says that Cathleen is no longer a poor old woman, but 'a young girl, and she had the walk of a queen.' (Yeats, 1985, p. 88)

The potential of literature to incite action weighed on Yeats, who felt himself accountable for the 'terrible beauty' of the 1916 conflicts.

Three decades after the 1902 production, he asks in one of his last poems, 'Man and the Echo' (1939):

> All that I have said and done,
> Now that I am old and ill,
> Turns into a question till
> I lie awake night after night
> And never get the answers right.
> Did that play of mine send out
> Certain men the English shot?
>
> (Yeats, 1992, p. 392)

Translated by Priscila Borges Rodrigues



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Oscar Wilde: From Poetry to Theatre and from Theatre to Eternity

Fábio Waki

Photo: Public Domain

Oscar Fingal O'Flahertie Wills Wilde was born in Dublin in 1854, into an upper-middle-class family from the city.

Sir William Wilde, his father, was a doctor by training and a folklorist by interest. Lady Jane Wilde, his mother, was a poet by militancy and a translator by occasion. Both came from Protestant families but did not align themselves with the view that the British Crown should maintain such tight control over Ireland. On the contrary, they shared the belief that Ireland should secure freedoms from that Crown. They were particularly devoted to a strategy of colonial resistance in the country known as cultural nationalism, which aimed to elevate Irish identity by promoting its culture

Photo of Oscar Wilde and Alfred Douglas, by Karl Giese. Public Domain.

– especially its popular culture. Both Sir William and Lady Jane were prolific intellectuals: Sir William, in addition to medical treatises and travel accounts, published *Irish Popular Superstitions* (1852), a brief treatise on myths and beliefs commonly held by the lower strata of Irish society; Lady Jane, beyond her militant and republican poetry, published several books on Irish folklore, among them *Cures, Mystic Charms and Superstitions of Ireland* (1887), a short study of narratives and rituals also found among this population. Sir William and Lady Jane were also politically engaged, often receiving important figures at salons and events hosted in their home on Merrion Square in Dublin – such as Dame Millicent Fawcett (1847–1929), a pioneering feminist and suffragist who would become the first woman to have a statue in her honour at the British Parliament.

In his own work, however, Wilde expresses fluctuating views on these cultural tensions: he is certainly proud of his Irish heritage but directs his energies towards a future as a representative of English society.

Between 1864 and 1871, Sir William and Lady Jane sent Wilde to Enniskillen, now in Northern Ireland, to study at Portora Royal School, a very traditional institution of English origins at the time. It was at this school that Wilde first came into contact with classical culture, which would become fundamental to his education and literature. From 1871 to 1874, Wilde returned to his native city to study at Trinity College Dublin, where he formally began his specialisation in classical studies under the supervision of Sir John Pentland Mahaffy (1839–1919), a classicist who would become his first intellectual mentor. His strong academic performance earned him the Berkeley Gold Medal, the college's highest distinction, as well as a scholarship to continue his education at the University of Oxford – then the principal centre for classical studies across Britain. At Oxford, Wilde enrolled in the course Literae Humaniores – today known as Classics – an extremely rigorous programme then designed to prepare new members of the British elite. Here, too, Wilde excelled, ultimately graduating with a rare Double First, that is, first-class honours in both of the final exams (Moderations and Greats). Wilde may today be best known as a writer, particularly as the infamous author of *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890), but it should be noted that, before fully dedicating himself to an artistic career, he had trained as a Hellenist and an intellectual of great stature at what was then the most prestigious centre for his field in northern Europe.

Between 1874 and 1878, while at Oxford, Wilde came into contact with a cultural and intellectual movement now known as British Aestheticism. Although loosely organised, this movement sought to reclaim classical culture as a model for nobler ways of life in an increasingly moralistic and materialistic modernity 0150 that is, a modernity increasingly driven by bourgeois ideals and economic, commercial, and consumerist interests. As many leaders of this movement were homosexual men, and as many of its members embraced extravagant lifestyles, it was often perceived at the time as madness and effeminacy – something comical but also troubling in a society where male same-sex relationships were criminalized. Many followers of British Aestheticism did indeed look to ancient

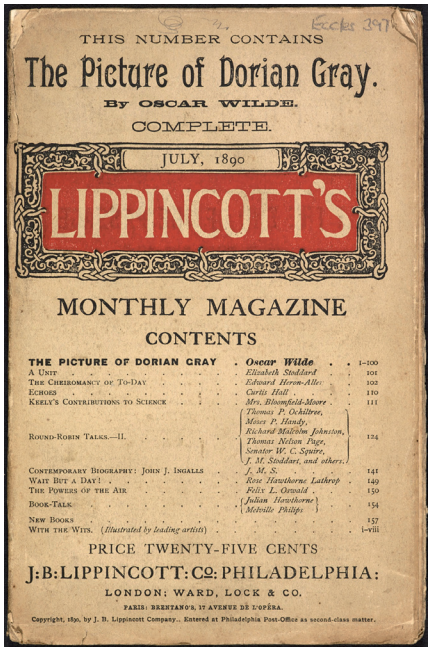
Greek culture, where such relationships were common, for arguments to legitimise their own sexuality in Victorian society; yet, in practice, one can see that this subversive interest formed part of a broader challenge to the rising moralism and materialism of the time.

In 1882, largely due to financial difficulties, Wilde accepted an offer to tour the United States and Canada delivering a series of lectures on British Aestheticism – then popularly known as the 'science of beauty,' that is, the science that teaches people how to recognise beauty in all things. Between 1884 and 1891, Wilde experienced personal and professional growth: in 1884, he married Constance Lloyd and had two sons, Cyril and Vyvyan; in 1887, he became editor of *The Woman's World*, reshaping it to give greater visibility to the women of his day; in 1888, he published his fairy tales – *The Happy Prince*, *The Nightingale and the Rose*, *The Selfish Giant*, *The Devoted Friend*, *The Remarkable Rocket*, *The Young King*, *The Birthday of the Infanta*, *The Fisherman and His Soul*, and *The Star-Child*; and in 1890, he finally published *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, a novella that, despite some negative reviews, was well received by the public, establishing his name on the English cultural scene.

Film The Picture of Dorian Gray ***(2009). Photo: Reproduction***

The Picture of Dorian Gray, his most famous work, narrates the fantastic moral decline of its protagonist. Dorian Gray, a young man of unparalleled beauty, finds himself protected by a portrait that ages in his stead and thus throws himself into Victorian society, using his charm to pursue even his most sordid desires. On the one hand, the novel is a critique of the criminalisation of homoerotic relationships between men in that society; on the other, it is a treatise on the relationship between art and morality, whose central idea is that for art to be art, it must recognise itself as being above moral constraint.

Yet Wilde's fame is not confined to this novel; much of his acclaim also stems from the early success of his *Poems* (1881), published shortly after his time at Oxford, and from the impact of his plays – particularly *Salomé* (1891) and *The Importance of Being Earnest* (1895).



THIS NUMBER CONTAINS

The Picture of Dorian Gray.

By OSCAR WILDE.

COMPLETE.

JULY, 1890

LIPPINCOTT'S

MONTHLY MAGAZINE

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Original edition of The Picture of Dorian Gray in Lippincott's Magazine *(1890).*

One of Wilde's most famous poems, included in *Poems*, is 'Ravenna', written in 1878 following a visit to that Italian city. Winner of the Newdigate Prize at Oxford, an honour awarded to undergraduates for verse compositions, the poem praises Dante Alighieri (1265–1321) and Lord Byron (1788–1824) – writers associated with the city – and exalts Ravenna's entire history, from its medieval roots to its place within modern Italy. 'Ravenna' is also something of a study by Wilde of his own condition as a writer seeking to establish himself within

THEDA BARA
A suprema encarnadora da maldade e da volupia, a actriz que sabe soberanamente impor-se ás platéas, as mais exigentes
Interpretará
SEGUNDA-FEIRA
A execranda princeza e bailarina pagã
SALOMÉ'
Imitando-lhes os lascivos meneios que a historia nos descreve, a perversidade que a levou ao crime nefando de mandar degolar o Apostolo João Baptista, para depois de morto sugar-lhe nos labios frios e contrahidos os beijos que em vida lhe haviam sido recusados
8 actos de maravilhas e apparelos nunca excedidos em outros films. Peça edilada pelo exponente maximo da cultura cinematographica
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The newspaper Correio da Manhã announced the play Salomé, *starred by Theda Bara, in Rio de Janeiro, in 1919. Photo: Public Domain*

Gemma Bellincioni played Salomé *at the Municipal Theatre of Rio de Janeiro in 1910. Photo: Public Domain*

Victorian culture. Rich in personal reflections and impressions, and marked by exaggerated poetic imagery and sonority, the poem serves as a calling card from a student aiming to position himself as a representative of British Aestheticism. Many of the poems compiled in *Poems* explore elements of classical culture – Greece and Italy being its principal heirs – and adopt forms and themes that intensify emotions and sensations – faculties of the body which the aesthetes sought to revalorise in a culture increasingly reduced to reason, moralism, and the materialism of its own economic expansion.

Salomé, originally written in French, is a one–act play centred on the circumstances surrounding the death of John the Baptist. Salomé, daughter of Herodias and stepdaughter of Herod Antipas, offers him a dance in exchange for the head of the preacher, by whom she is

seduced but not reciprocated. This is the work in which Wilde most openly explores taboos surrounding sexuality – in particular incest, voyeurism, and necrophilia. Salomé, the object of many characters' desires, attempts through a sensual dance – the 'Dance of the Seven Veils' – to seduce her stepfather and persuade him to grant even her most eccentric desires – in this case, the head of John the Baptist on a platter, so that she might at last kiss his lips.

The Importance of Being Earnest, meanwhile, is a three-act comedy of manners focused on the moralisation of social relations in Victorian society. Constrained by their social obligations, Jack and Algernon, the protagonists, invent secret identities to escape their realities and pursue their interests; but these identities – as well as Jack's obscure past – end up jeopardising their relationships with Gwendolen and Cecily, with whom they fall in love. Over the course of the play, Jack and Algernon invent a mysterious and elegant gentleman named Ernest, with whom Gwendolen and Cecily become infatuated. The play, as this title suggests, is a critique of the often excessive prudishness of social relations in Victorian society, whose values and class hierarchies frequently determine the possibility – or impossibility – of romantic relationships.

In 1891, already well established in Victorian society, Wilde met Alfred 'Bosie' Douglas (1870–1945), a poet sixteen years his junior with whom he began a tempestuous relationship.

Between 1891 and 1895, Wilde enjoyed stardom, with many of his plays staged to great acclaim, but this success was cut short by an incident that would also mark the beginning of his downfall. The Marquess of Queensberry, Douglas's father, disapproved of his son's relationship with Wilde and accused the writer of committing the crime of sodomy – an insult which led Wilde to sue him for libel. During the trial, however, it became evident not only that Wilde had indeed been involved with Douglas, but that he had also engaged in relationships with numerous other young men – charges which ultimately led the jury to sentence him to two years of imprisonment and hard labour.

Wilde served his sentence between May 1895 and May 1897, during which time he wrote three seminal texts: *De Profundis*, a memoir of his downfall and transformation through imprisonment; *The Ballad of Reading Gaol*, a poem recounting his experience of witnessing a hanging; and 'Children in Prison', a newspaper article condemning the cruel treatment of incarcerated children by the authorities of the time.

Once released, Wilde promptly left England for France and Italy, far from his public and acquaintances; yet during his travels, his health deteriorated rapidly, largely as a consequence of the harsh conditions he endured in prison.

Wilde died at the Hôtel d'Alsace, a modest hotel in central Paris, on 30 November 1900, probably from meningoencephalitis.

Who is Bernard Shaw?

Rosalie Rahal Haddad

Bernard Shaw was born in Dublin, Ireland, in 1856. When he was 20 years old, he left his native country to try his luck in London, England. Upon arriving there, penniless, he adopted the British Museum as his house of learning, his refuge against the harsh winter – for which he did not have appropriate clothes – and began his instruction in History, Philosophy, and Letters. However, unlike James Joyce, Oscar Wilde, and his fellow Nobel-prize winners Samuel Beckett and Seamus Heaney, Shaw dropped out of school and did not go to university. Considering that he began his literary journey in the Victorian era and concluded it much later, one readily notices that there was an

enormous difference between his manner of thinking and that of other intellectuals of his time.

Shaw should not be presented as an intimidating old thinker whose opinions were rummaged by journalists and intellectuals, but as someone who said pertinent things to the public from different social classes. Not by chance, one of his most famous plays is *Pygmalion* (1913), which tells how a phonetician managed to transform the ways and the speech of a flower seller, who was then able to pass herself off as a lady. This play, permeated by a reflection about the different social classes, was adapted numerous times, as in the well-known – 1965 film ***My Fair Lady.***

Quite unprecedently in Ireland and England, where he lived for most of his life until his death in 1950, Shaw encouraged people who had not received formal education to think for themselves on any difficult subjects.

Not long after his arrival in London, Shaw became a member of the Fabian Society. Fabian socialism differed from Marxism in that it did not encourage violence but social activities to improve society. On that note, it fought against child labor and long working hours for adults, while defending the construction of houses and hospital facilities in poor areas.

Nevertheless, some scholars find it difficult to understand how precocious Shaw was when campaigning for women's right to vote, to receive formal education, and to be financially independent; some do not recognize his fight for social equality in his lectures, speeches, and debates from 1885 to 1946, in which he presented his social critique on many subjects, such as sexual reform, socialism, childhood, education, drama, censorship, and topics considered taboo at the time.

It is important to indicate that his plays were plays of ideas, not intended solely for entertainment. His comedies not only made people laugh but also made them think. He was against the drama of his time, the so-called 'well-made play', which added very little to the intellect of the spectator and presented characters of no resemblance to real

life. One could always find the good and the bad women, the villain and the honorable man, and the prostitutes always had to die on the stage, thus upholding the moral code of the Victorian audience and preventing plays from being censored. Censorship was introduced to the English stage in 1737 and was only abolished in 1968.

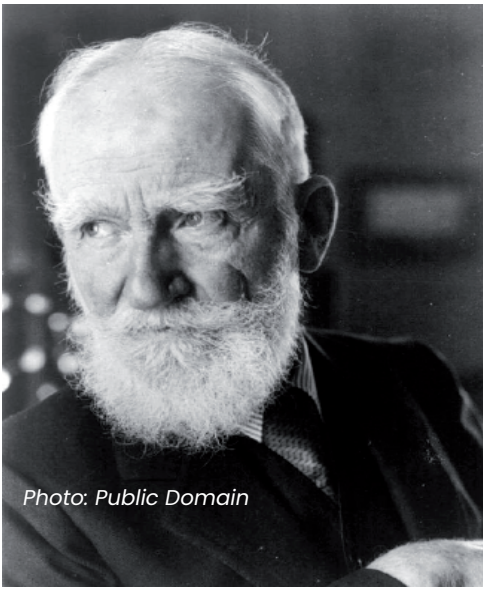

Photo: Public Domain

Shaw refused to follow the pattern of the plays accepted by the Censor. For example, ***Mrs. Warren's Profession,*** written in 1893, describes the life of a woman in England who became a prostitute to avoid starvation and later became the owner of several brothels in Europe. Thus, she was able to educate her daughter at Cambridge University and to lead a life of comfort and luxury. The play was banned, after all no prostitutes were meant to survive on stage in 1893.

Because of the reflections brought about by his plays, which encouraged spectators to think critically about subjects that are still extremely relevant – not to mention, of course, the very quality of his texts, which cross various genres –, it is important for young people in Brazil to become familiar with this playwright who is widely read in the English-speaking world and so little known in Brazil.

Shaw in Brazil: An Interview with Rosalie Rahal Haddad

How did you become interested in Bernard Shaw's work?

RRH: From the time I began researching Shaw, I read a considerable number of secondary sources on his work as a drama critic, novelist, and playwright. However, I soon found out that there is always something new to learn about him, a new angle of his work and personality, as well as new work by young – or not so young – academics who specialize in this author.

Did your publications in Brazil and abroad encourage you to produce Shaw's plays in Brazil? Which ones?

RRH: Shaw has been the subject of my academic life since my master's at the University of São Paulo — *Bernard Shaw e a Revolução do Teatro Inglês* (1997). I continued studying his works in my doctoral thesis — *Bernard Shaw's Novels* – published in Germany in 2004, and later, during my post-doctoral research – *Bernard Shaw in Brazil* – published in Oxford in 2016. In addition, I write articles and have been producing Shaw's plays in São Paulo, such as *The Simpleton of the Unexpected Isles* (2008), *Mrs. Warren's Profession* (2018), *The Millionairess* (2019), and *The Doctors' Dilemma* (2023), besides other plays not by Shaw.

The last play by Shaw I staged so far, *The Doctors' Dilemma*, was quite ambitious, with a mixture of comedy and drama. As usual, the author criticized society, only that this time it contained a condemnation of the medical class. Among several doctors on stage, the only one who was able to give an honest diagnosis was the most humble and poor. The others' intention was to increase their fortune, and their conscience was not affected whether the patient died or not. All the

Cast of the play Mrs Warren's Profession (2018). Photo credit: MASP.

above-mentioned plays were well received by the audience in São Paulo, which included young people and adults.

What advice would you give to young people regarding the message of Shaw's work?

RRH: It is my sincere hope that I have been able to transmit my interest on Shaw the way he deserves. It took a long time for the audience, directors, and producers in England to recognize the message of his plays. But despite all the resistance from the critics, he became the most widely staged playwright in Europe and in the USA. It seems fitting to mention that Shaw never stopped writing plays, speeches, instructing drama students, actors and directors to master the art of staging plays, until his death in 1950. Although one may not agree with his drama of ideas, it is my opinion that his effort to improve the British stage from Victorian stratified notions to modern thought can hardly be questioned.

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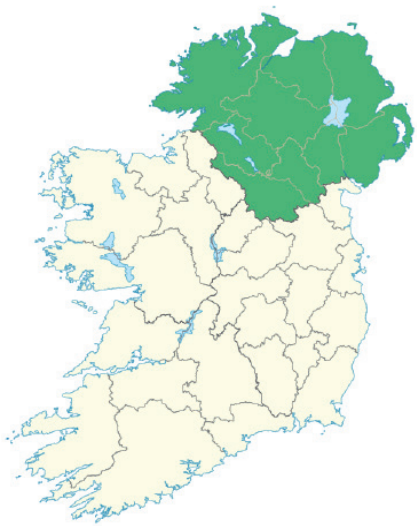
Theatre in Northern Ireland, or Ulster Literary Theatre

Alessandra Cristina Rigonato



Damn Yeats, we'll write our own plays.[1]

The theatre movement in Northern Ireland began to take shape in the early twentieth century, when Ireland was still under British Empire rule. In 1902, in the city of Belfast, two young men, Bulmer Hobson and David Parkhill, founded the Ulster Literary Theatre (ULT). Their initial intention was to bring to the North plays from Dublin, written by nationalist writers such as William Butler Yeats and Lady Gregory. However, Yeats refused to lend the name of his company and did not authorize his plays to be performed as part of a northern branch. In response, the founders of the ULT chose to develop their own original works, seeking to create a dramaturgy that would reflect the unique social and political reality of Northern Ireland (Murray, 2000; Vandevelde, 2004).

While the Abbey Theatre, led by Yeats and Lady Gregory, avoided overtly political themes and sought to rescue symbols of Celtic folklore, the Ulster theatre took a different path, embracing social and political satire. *The Enthusiast* (1905) by David Parkhill is a key play in this regard. The play features a young idealist trying

to convince his rural family to adopt modern farming methods. It humorously portrays the resistance to change in a conservative society and criticizes the devaluation of knowledge in Ulster's rural areas. Even without naming the author, Yeats acknowledged in a letter that the play had sparked enthusiasm and discussion among audiences (Yeats, 2005).

The plays produced by the ULT made use of local dialects and explored everyday subjects with a critical and comic tone. This tendency was made explicit in the manifesto published in *Uladh*, the group's magazine, which claimed that artists from the North were more inclined toward satire than poetry. Between 1904 and 1930, the ULT staged 47 original plays, many of which featured strong political and social criticism (Morash, 2002). Scholars such as Eva Urban (2011) identify this satirical vein as a defining characteristic of Ulster theatre – one that continues in the work of contemporary playwrights such as David Ireland and Martin Lynch.

During the civil conflict known as *The Troubles* (from the late 1960s to 1998), theatre in Northern Ireland remained active and gained momentum as a form of cultural resistance and a space for political debate. A key company in this context was the Charabanc Theatre Company, founded in Belfast in 1983 by five actresses – including Marie Jones – who were frustrated by the lack of professional opportunities and by female roles traditionally relegated to the margins of male-centered narratives. With a collaborative approach rooted in the lived experiences of working-class women, the group developed an original dramaturgy that foregrounded the female experience during the conflict. Their first play, *Lay Up Your Ends* (1983), portrayed linen mill workers as protagonists of local history. Although often conceived as feminist or socialist, the members of Charabanc rejected strict ideological classifications, favoring creative spontaneity and collective listening. In contrast to the Field Day Theatre Company – founded by intellectuals such as Brian Friel and Seamus Heaney with academic and national ambitions – Charabanc represented the other end of the theatrical spectrum: more intuitive, community-based, and focused on women's narratives. The company produced eighteen original works and left a lasting legacy on the Irish theatrical

Photos: publicity/UOL theatre (1) and Gazeta do Povo (2)

scene, paving the way for Marie Jones's international recognition with *Stones in His Pockets* (1996).

Currently, theatre in Northern Ireland reflects both the continuity and transformation of the satirical tradition inaugurated by the Ulster Literary Theatre, as discussed in the article *A Comic Portrayal of the Troubles in Contemporary Drama* (2017).This twenty-first-century reconfiguration of satire enables new approaches to the wounds left by the Troubles and to the challenges of a post-1998 peace agreement society. Authors such as David Ireland, with *Cyprus Avenue* (2016), and Abbie Spallen, with *Pumpgirl* (2006) and *Lally the Scut* (2015), explore themes such as fragmented identity, symbolic violence, and sectarianism. All filtered through a disturbing, sharp-edged humor. These plays engage deeply with the political context of Northern Ireland, exposing ongoing tensions between memory, trauma, and daily life.

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ABBIE SPALLEN
Pumpgirl

Photo: publicity
Pumpgirl *(2006), play by Abbie Spallen.*
Foto: Divulgação

Other relevant works, such as *Removed* (2019) by Fionnuala Kennedy, which addresses the experiences of young people in the state care system,

and *The Gap Year* (2022) by Clare McMahon, which follows a journey across a divided Ireland, demonstrate how the stage remains a privileged space for listening to and confronting social contradictions. In this context, satire continues to serve as a critical strategy, renewing the legacy of Northern Irish theatre for new generations.

1 An expression attributed to Bulmer Hobson in 1902, during a train ride from Dublin to Belfast, after an unsuccessful attempt to collaborate with Yeats and his theatre company (Sam Hanna Bell, 1972, p. 4). Available at: https://archive.org/details/theatreinulsters0000bell. Accessed July 21, 2025.

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The Stage as a Place for Reconciliation: The Field Day Company

Michelle Andressa Alvarenga de Souza

Founders of the Field Day Theatre Company: *(Standing) Seamus Deane, Brian Friel and Stephen Rea; (Sitting down) Seamus Heaney, David Hammond and Tom Paulin.*

The partition of Ireland in 1921 resulted in social, political, and religious divisions beyond the geographic border between the two countries. The Troubles, as aforementioned, were a period that witnessed violent conflicts between paramilitary groups from Independent Ireland and Northern Ireland. The peace was reached in

1998 with the Good Friday Agreement, when the border that divided Ireland ceased to exist, even though the two distinct territories remained valid.

As politicians attempted to find a solution in the Irish and British parliaments, a group of artists and intellectuals from Northern Ireland tried to create a middle ground for reconciliation through theatre. The *Field Day Company* was founded at the beginning of the 1980s, and its main objective was to create a *fifth province* in the island of Ireland, an imaginary and creative space that was unaffected by the divisions of the other four historical provinces (Connacht, Leinster, Munster, and Ulster). This would be a province of the mind, a place capable of transcending the oppositions of Irish politics, where all conflicts could be resolved. To the Field Day group, this initiative would allow us to look at Ireland in a different way, to reach another possible Ireland.

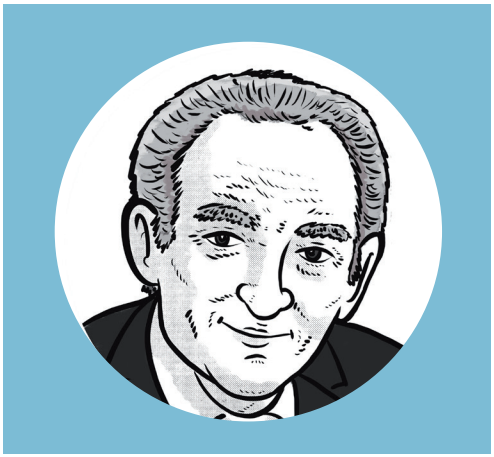
The plays produced by the Field Day Company asked the audience to unlearn the Ireland they already knew, to detach themselves from "the received ways of thinking about it and to learn new ones"[1] to contemplate it. *Translations*, written by the playwright Brian Friel, was the first play to be produced by them, and it is

Performance of Brian Friel's Translations *in 2013.*
Photo: Publicity/WikiCommons - Public Domain

considered their central text. It premiered in September 1980 in Derry, a city in Northern Ireland that is close to the border with the Republic of Ireland.

The plot takes place in August 1833 in a fictitious rural village called Baile Beag (County Donegal), where an Irish-speaking community lives. The choice to write the story in the past is part of the group's intention to bring to the stage a historical moment that is recognizable both to Ireland and Northern Ireland, an event prior to the political, religious, and geographic divisions. The play does not deal with any of these topics directly, and its focus is on language. The setting of the play places it at a time of great cultural transition, when the Irish language was slowly being replaced by English. This dramaturgical work explores a real expedition undertaken by the British military in Ireland in the nineteenth century, in order to complete the Ordnance Survey. It was a project of the British Crown to map the Irish territory with English names. The 1830s were also the period when the National School System was being implemented in Ireland, when the *Hedge Schools* were being replaced by teaching institutions that taught exclusively in the English language.

A great innovation of this play is the way the relation between language, communication and translation was addressed. Although



Brian Friel

the community of Baile Beag speaks Irish daily, the play was written in English. Irish is never spoken on stage and the only expressions that astonish the audience are in Greek and Latin, languages that are studied and mastered by the peasants, who often demonstrate that they can be intellectually superior to the British soldiers. The translations that are made as the stories of the characters are told go beyond the translation of the place names, as they also involve discussion about belonging, cultural heritage and ancestry. The spectators only realize there are two languages being spoken on stage when the soldiers' explanation of what the expedition is and what they are doing there is translated to the local community. This intelligent dramaturgical resource takes the audience by surprise and provides a more problematic dimension to the communication (or lack of it) between the British and the Irish. The translation even included the intimate relationship between two lovers, and one of the most beautiful scenes of the play is when an English soldier and an Irish woman, who are in love, try to say to each other how much they want to be together. To Michael Cronin, it is through this exercise that Friel demonstrates to the public that translating is part of the contemporary condition of the Irish, because 'time and change have meant that it is no longer possible for a painless, unproblematic shift back to the originary Eden of Irish'[2]. For this reason, at the end of the play, the characters who resisted learning the 'new place names' of Baile Beag (now called Ballybeg after the English map) realized that the linguistic transition is inevitable.

By adding real political, social, and linguistic events to the play, Brian Friel allowed *Translations* to become a rewriting of history, an alternative perspective on the cultural changes that were being imposed on the Irish. In his dramaturgical work, Friel has depicted events that impacted all the Irish people in a similar way, as the Great Famine, which resulted in the forced emigration of millions of Irish and started one of the biggest diasporas of the world. In *Translations*, the imminent Famine appears through the constant fear of the sweet smell, something that could indicate that the potato crops were rotting underground, before they were even harvested.

The village imagined by Friel, Baile Beag, is also the setting for some of his other plays. *Philadelphia, Here I Come!* (1964), his first great success in theatre, shows the last night at home of a young man who is about to leave his life in Donegal to emigrate to the USA. The uncertainties and the fear of emigration are developed against the poverty and the feeling of stagnation that this character tries to overcome. *Dancing at Lughnasa* (1990) also takes place in the same village, and it is a play constructed as a flashback, built from the memories of an adult man who remembers the summer when he lived with his aunts at the age of seven.

The plays produced by the Field Day Theatre Company were intended to be an artistic response to the violence of the Troubles, and their stories about families and small communities attempted to move the Irish from the North and the South in the same manner. They hoped that, through theatre, the dichotomies that divided the Irish society and the Irish identity (Catholic versus Protestant /

Staging of the play Dancing at Lughnasa
Photo: Flickr/Tom Cochrane – Public Domain

unionist versus nationalist) would be overcome. Although the artists and intellectuals from the Field Day group were born in Northern Ireland, they belonged to the Catholic minority and believed that a significant part of their identities remained suppressed in their lives and work in the UK. In a documentary from 1981, actor Stephen Rea shared how, as an Irishman working in England, part of who he was could not be expressed in his artistic practice. According to him, he was recurrently criticized for revealing his Irish accent in the moments when his characters demonstrated passion. In the same manner, in the poem *The Ministry of Fear*, Seamus Heaney revealed the prejudice and violence he faced for being a Catholic student in a Protestant School. It is because they openly addressed their Irishness that the group ended up being related to the nationalist tradition.

The Field Day Theatre Company created a place for dialogue, beauty, reconstruction and for a possible reconciliation where all Irish people could belong. With this, they paved the way for other playwrights who have also grown up between the UK and Ireland to use theatre as a tool of expression that accommodates their hybrid identities. One of these dramaturges is Martin McDonagh, born in London to Irish parents. His contemporary work navigates through the historical traumas of rural Ireland, the constant effects of English colonialism and the challenges of our society to overcome structures of inequality and violence that were build and are maintained by relations of dominance and power.

To know more, read these:

The linguistic fluidity of Translations

Translations and reconciliation

Notes

1 Andrews, Elmer. The art of Brian Friel. London: MacMillan Press Ltd., 1995. pp. 164.

2 Cronin, Michael. *Translating Ireland*: Translation, Languages, Cultures. Cork: Cork University 2Press, 1996. pp. 199

Cinema in the Republic of Ireland: From its Origins to the Three Contemporary Waves

Cecília Adolpho Martins

The Volta Theatre in Dublin, an initiative by James Joyce and investors, Photo: Liam Leary/National Library of Ireland/Public Domain

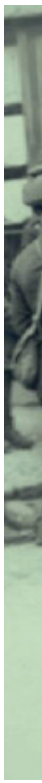
From its origins in the late 19th century to contemporary productions, Irish cinema, reflects the country's political, social, and cultural transformations. Initially shaped by foreign influence and a fledgling local production, cinema in Ireland only consolidated in the late twentieth century with the emergence of a distinct cinematic identity. This introduction provides a brief historical overview, summarizing the trajectory from early itinerant screenings to the three waves of contemporary cinema, highlighting key films, filmmakers, and public policies that shaped the seventh art in the country.

The Silent Era and Early Productions (1890–1920)

Cinema arrived in Ireland shortly after its first screenings in Paris and London, as early as the 1890s. Screenings were conducted by traveling exhibitors who set up screens in villages and towns, utilizing venues such as concert halls and theaters (Rockett, Gibbons, Hill, 1988). It was only in 1909 that the first permanent cinema, the Volta, opened in Dublin, spearheaded by James Joyce and a group of investors.

During this period, most films shown were foreign, with few local productions. Notable exceptions include:

- *Life on the Great Southern and Western Railway* (1904), a documentary by Louis de Clerq, considered the first Irish film;
- *A Cattle Drive in Galway* (1908) and *Whaling Ashore and Afloat* (1908), by Robert Paul, depicting rural and coastal scenes;
- *Glimpses of Erin* (1910), by Arthur Melbourne-Cooper, a series of short films showcasing Irish landscapes and customs.
- *The Film Company of Ireland* (FCOI), founded in 1916, represented the first attempt to establish a national film industry. However, its early projects were lost during the Easter Rising when the company's offices were destroyed.



Cinema in the Post-Independence Period (1922–1950)

Following independence in 1922, Ireland faced economic and political challenges that hindered the development of its cinema. The Civil War (1922–1923) and the lack of state investment led to the dominance of British and American productions, which often portrayed the Irish through stereotypes – either as romantic figures

(in U.S. cinema) or as violent and backward (in British cinema) (Kearney, 1992).

Irish Civil War in 1922; Irish families are together with the soldiers in Limerick. Photo: National Library of Ireland/Public Domain

Some local productions attempted to counter this narrative:

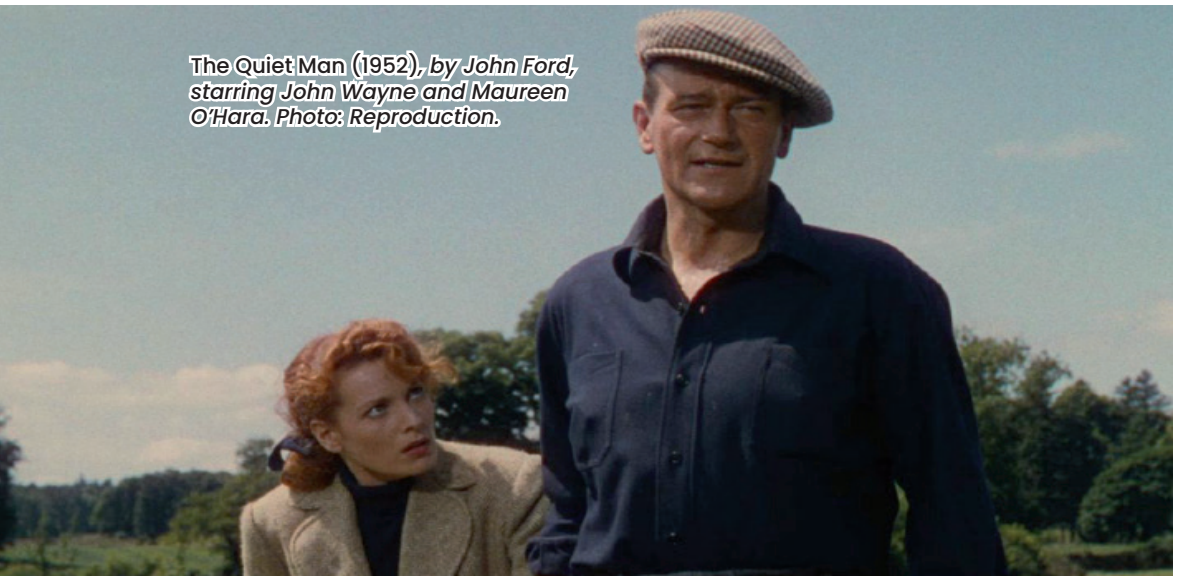
- *Irish Destiny* (1926), directed by Isaac Eppel, which depicted the War of Independence;
- *The Dawn* (1936), directed by Tom Cooper, Ireland's first sound feature film, portraying the struggle against British forces.

However, censorship under the Censorship of Films Act (1923) and the influence of the Catholic Church limited creative freedom. Films such as ***The Informer*** (1935), directed by John Ford, were initially banned for allegedly promoting anti-nationalist views.

Between 1958 and 1963, there were almost no significant film productions. Ireland had begun opening up to foreign trade and American popular culture. According to Terence Brown in *Ireland – A Social and Cultural History, 1922–2002* (2004), this economic expansion aided national development, generating employment and renewing nationalist sentiment. In 1963, the first national television service, ***RTÉ***, was launched, though the Catholic Church condemned the alternative worldview brought by television, particularly the perceived moral corruption of youth by American culture.

By the late 1960s, the desire to deconstruct Hollywood's romanticized image of Ireland – seen in films like ***The Quiet Man*** (1952) – and to forge a national cinema led to proposals for an ***Irish Film Board***, though it only materialized in the early 1980s. As Martin McLoone (1994) notes, the turning point for Irish film production came with the *Arts Act of 1973*, which recognized cinema as an art form worthy of state funding.

Since the 1960s–1980s, most Irish films relied partially or entirely on financing from foreign industries, sparking debates over what



The Quiet Man (1952), by John Ford, starring John Wayne and Maureen O'Hara. Photo: Reproduction.

constituted an "Irish" film – whether it depended on themes, setting, or the nationality of the filmmakers. Even today, most films made in or about Ireland are not fully funded by the local industry; instead, Ireland and Northern Ireland compete with larger European industries for funding, relying on co-productions with the U.S., U.K., and EU (Pettitt, 2010).

The Three Waves of Contemporary Cinema

The three waves of contemporary Irish cinema are not rigidly defined by dates but by thematic shifts reflecting historical moments:

- The First Wave (1970s–1980s) emerged with the consolidation of the *Irish Film Board* (1983–1987) and was characterized by avant-garde filmmaking.
- The Second Wave (1990s–2000s), known as the *"Celtic Tiger"* era, began around 1993 with the re-establishment of the *IFB* and was marked by economic growth and technological advancements.
- The Third Wave (Post-2000s), or *"Post-Celtic Tiger"* cinema, addressed the consequences of rapid economic expansion and subsequent recession, peaking around 2006.

The First Wave of Contemporary Cinema (1970–1980)

The *Arts Act of 1973*, which recognized cinema as an art form eligible for public funding, spurred politically distinct filmmaking. The establishment of the *Irish Film Board (IFB)* in 1983 fostered a generation of independent filmmakers like Pat Murphy, Cathal Black, and Bob Quinn, who challenged traditional representations of Ireland.

The Reefer and the Model (1988), *by John Comerford*
Photo: Reproduction/John Comerford Films.

Films such as ***Pigs*** (1984) and ***Reefer and the Model*** (1988) explored urban themes and marginalized characters, moving away from rural idealization. According to Debbie Ging (2002), this wave was defined by avant-garde cinema that questioned national identities and amplified excluded voices.

The Second Wave (1990–2000) and the Celtic Tiger

The IFB's re-establishment in 1993 coincided with the economic boom known as the 'Celtic Tiger'. Directors like Jim Sheridan and Neil Jordan gained international acclaim with films such as:

- *My Left Foot* (1989), winner of two Oscars;
- *The Crying Game* (1992), which explored gender and political conflict;
- *The Butcher Boy* (1997), an adaptation of Patrick McCabe's novel critiquing traditional Irish society.

These films balanced commercial appeal with social critique, though scholars like Ruth Barton (2002) argued they prioritized universal themes over deeper political engagement.

The Butcher Boy *(1997)*
Photo: Reproduction

The Third Wave (Post-2000) and Cinema of Crisis

The 1990s–2000s saw unprecedented economic growth, attracting multinationals and immigrants due to tax incentives and trade liberalization (Allen, 2002). Yet this development was uneven: while a minority prospered, many faced urban overcrowding, unemployment, and housing insecurity.

Twenty-first-century Irish cinema reflects the contradictions of the Celtic Tiger. Films like ***Kisses*** (2008), *Life's a Breeze* (2013), and ***Rosie*** (2018) tackle themes of inequality, migration, and housing crises, exposing the side effects of rapid globalization. As Debbie Ging (2013) notes, this era also highlights crises of masculinity, marginalized voices, and neoliberal consequences, solidifying a more politically engaged and diverse cinema.

The portrayal of socially excluded characters – addicts, immigrants, and people with disabilities – is not new in Irish culture but gained fresh nuance post-Celtic Tiger. In *Filmic Portraits of Contemporary Ireland (2003–2018)* (MARTINS, 2022), I analyze films such as:

- *Adam & Paul* (2004) and *Glassland* (2014): drug and alcohol addiction;

- *Garage* (2007) and *I Used to Live Here* (2015): bullying;
- *Sanctuary* (2016) and *Patrick's Day* (2014): intellectual disability and mental illness;
- *The Front Line* (2006) and *Trafficked* (2010): immigration and crime.

The Front Line (2016)
Photo: Reproduction

These narratives reveal *how Irishness* is redefined amid demographic and cultural shifts, marked by individualism, inequality, and stigma. Intercultural tensions between tradition and globalization create new forms of belonging and exclusion.

Patrick's Day *(2014), directed by Terry McMahon. Photo: Reproduction.*

Conclusion

Contemporary Irish cinema has become a critical space for discussing the paradoxes of economic development, amplifying silenced voices and questioning the limits of the 'new Ireland.' By centering marginalized characters, these films not only document crises but also reinvent national narratives in a changing world.

Over more than a century, Irish cinema has evolved from an incipient, stereotype-dependent industry into an auteur-driven and critically engaged cinematography that dialogues with the nation's history and contemporary challenges. The three waves of contemporary cinema demonstrate how film in Ireland has become an essential medium for exploring identity, memory, and social transformation.

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The Butcher Boy. Directed by Neil Jordan. Ireland/USA: Warner Bros., 1997. DVD, 110 min.

The Crying Game. Directed by Neil Jordan. UK/Ireland: Palace Pictures, 1992. DVD, 112 min.

The Dawn. Directed by Tom Cooper. Ireland: Killarney Film Productions, 1936. 35mm, 90 min.

Garage. Directed by Lenny Abrahamson. Ireland: Element Pictures, 2007. DVD, 85 min.

Glassland. Directed by Gerard Barrett. Ireland: Treasure Entertainment, 2014. DVD, 93 min.

Glimpses of Erin. Directed by Arthur Melbourne-Cooper. UK: Alpha Picture Co., 1910. Short film.

The Informer. Directed by John Ford. USA: RKO Radio Pictures, 1935. DVD, 91 min.

Irish Destiny. Directed by George Dewhurst. Ireland: Film Company of Ireland, 1926. 35mm, 70 min.

Kisses. Directed by Lance Daly. Ireland: Fastnet Films, 2008. DVD, 72 min.

Life's a Breeze. Directed by Lance Daly. Ireland: Fastnet Films, 2013. DVD, 90 min.

My Left Foot. Directed by Jim Sheridan. Ireland: Ferndale Films, 1989. DVD, 103 min.

Patrick's Day. Directed by Terry McMahon. Ireland: Ripple World Pictures, 2014. DVD, 100 min.

Pigs. Directed by Cathal Black. Ireland: Black Star Films, 1984. DVD, 85 min.

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Rosie. Directed by Paddy Breathnach. Ireland: Element Pictures, 2018. DVD, 86 min.

Sanctuary. Directed by Len Collin. Ireland: Blue Moon Productions, 2016. DVD, 90 min.

The Front Line. Directed by David Gleeson. Ireland: Wide Eye Films, 2006. DVD, 90 min.

Trafficked. Directed by Ciaran O'Connor. Ireland: High Point Films, 2010. DVD, 90 min.

Cinema and Migration in the Irish Context

Noélia Borges

Scene from Brooklyn *(2015)*
Photo Reproduction

This chapter discusses the themes of cinema and migration, exploring how they relate to the Irish reality. Based on films produced about the Irish diaspora, the text invites readers to reflect on the reasons why people leave their country of origin and the challenges of starting a new life elsewhere. It also addresses issues such as contact with different cultures, the prejudices faced by immigrants and the feeling of not feeling part of the new country.

At a first glance, cinema and migration may seem like very different subjects, as they belong to different areas of scientific knowledge. However, they can be related and interact in many ways. Cinematographic images allow us to take a look at what is happening in the world, operating on regimes of visibility and sayability. Migration, on the other hand, which is inherent to the human journey, is represented on cinema screens, especially in times

of crisis, such as wars, poverty, violence and natural disasters, which cause thousands of people to leave their homes. Moving images in the cinema don't just serve to entertain. They also play an important role in culture, helping to construct discourses about today's world. In this way, cinema becomes a way of reflecting on reality and the human condition. With the use of the camera and the editing of scenes, it gives us clues to imagine, think, reflect and understand different realities in time and space. In addition, cinema can open up space to debate prejudices, stereotypes and the roles that different social groups occupy in society. Therefore, we see that cinema and migration are not only connected, but also come closer to other fields of knowledge, contributing to the construction of meanings and a broader view of the world.

This study doesn't intend to talk separately about cinema and migration, but rather to show how these two themes connect and help construct the meaning of the text. Before continuing the discussion, it is important to understand some terms that talk about the movement of people between places: 'migration', 'immigration' and 'emigration'. When we use verbs, we have: 'migrate', 'immigrate' and 'emigrate'. It's worth remembering that 'immigrate' and 'emigrate' are opposite words. 'Immigrate' means to enter a country to live there, while 'emigrate' is to leave one's own country to live in another. 'Migrate', on the other hand, refers to the act of moving from one region to another, either within the same country or outside of it. This movement can be temporary or permanent.

People migrate for various reasons, such as seeking better economic conditions, fleeing social or cultural problems, or because of natural disasters.

In this context, it is also important to understand what diaspora means. Although it is a more complex concept, it refers to the dispersion of a people or group that leaves a place of origin, often because of cultural, religious or political conflicts. This group starts to live elsewhere, either in the country they left or in the country that receives them. The best-known examples are the Jewish and African diasporas, but the Irish diaspora is also very large, considering the size

'Emigrants leaving Ireland. *Engraving by Henry Doyle (1827–1892), from Mary Francis Cusack's* Illustrated History of Ireland, 1868'. *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia. 'Irish Diaspora".*

of Ireland's current population. Therefore, we can say that migration and diaspora are concepts linked to the movement of people and can happen forcibly or voluntarily.

When we look at the way immigrants are shown in films that talk about diasporas (i.e. the departure of a people from their place of origin), we see that this has been happening since the beginning of the twentieth century. The change of place and the way people experience this process have always aroused the interest of many directors and producers, especially those who have gone through this kind of experience. Nowadays, many films – both fiction and documentaries – deal with social and cultural issues linked to migration, because today's world continues to bring many real examples of this phenomenon.

Films made in various parts of the world deal with immigration and show how immigrants face reality in new countries, also

Saoirse Ronan in Brooklyn
Photo: Reproduction

highlighting the ways in which they resist, adapt and live together in different cultures. The aim of this chapter is not to focus on the economic aspects of migration, even though political and economic factors are always present. The intention here is to look more at the social and cultural side of these stories, especially Irish migration, highlighting how immigrants deal with the 'Other' – in other words, with people from other cultures – and how this involves questions of identity and how each person sees themselves and asserts themselves elsewhere.

Studying migration in Irish cinema and literature is like following, step by step, the story of a person, group or community who leaves their place of origin and goes to a new destination. This journey involves cultural changes and shows how these people are received in the new place and how they face the reality of being away from home. When making this analysis, it's important to think about a few questions: What led these people to leave their country? Was it poverty, lack of development, climate disasters or religious persecution, for example? How does the change of place and culture happen? How do they deal with the feeling of not belonging and, at

the same time, the desire to feel part of the new place? Is this journey painful? And how does it affect their minds, emotions and identity?

Although there are various ways of understanding what 'diasporic cinema' or 'transcultural cinema' is, in this chapter we will focus on what matters most: how does cinema transcend cultural and geographical boundaries? To do this, it's important to remember that film, as well as being a work of art, is also a reflection of the society and time in which it was made. In other words, it acts as a kind of historical document, mixing reality and fiction. In this text, we're going to talk specifically about the so-called 'diasporic Irish cinema', in other words, the experience of Irish people living outside Ireland, nostalgia for their homeland, Irish identity.

The history of Irish cinema is closely connected to the history of its people and culture. This appears both in films produced in Ireland itself and in other countries, including adaptations of Irish literary works. The Irish diaspora – in other words, the movement of people from Ireland to other countries – is very present in the United States, but also features prominently in Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom and even Argentina. These immigrants took their stories and traditions with them wherever they went, and this also appears in the cinema of these places.

Before presenting an example of a film that represents the life of an Irish immigrant far from home, we need to answer some important questions: why does someone decide to leave their country and live elsewhere? What is the experience of living abroad like? In the case of the Irish, the reasons have changed over time. Between 1820 and 1860, many left Ireland because they were fleeing famine and looking for a chance to live better. In the twentieth century, those who emigrated had other objectives – they wanted to improve their lives, find better jobs and have access to more opportunities. One of the most striking moments in this history was the Great Famine in Ireland between 1845 and 1850. This period was so difficult that thousands of people had to leave the country. This is a profound topic that is worth discussing in more detail. In the films, we can get a closer look at the

experience of living far from home. They show situations that many immigrants face in the diaspora, such as culture shock, the feeling of not belonging, the difficulties of adapting, among other challenges. All this leads us to better understand what it's like to be an immigrant and the impact this has on people's lives.

Irish emigrants in the early twentieth century. Photo: Public Domain

We're going to talk about the film *Brooklyn*, which is based on the book of the same name by Irish writer Colm Tóibín and has the theme of e/immigration as its leitmotif. The film, directed by John Crowley (also Irish), was released in 2015 and is a joint production between the United States, Canada and Ireland. It's a drama with touches of romance and is set in the 1950s.

The story follows the life of Eillis Lacey, a young Irish woman (the main character) who decides to leave her mother and sister in Ireland to try a new life in the United States. She goes to live in Brooklyn,

Scene in Skibbereen during the Great Famine by Cork artist James Mahony, The Illustrated London News*, 1847. Wikipedia. Great Famine, Ireland.*

New York – a neighbourhood known for receiving immigrants from various countries. The film deals with the challenges faced by Eillis as an immigrant: the mixture of feelings such as the enchantment

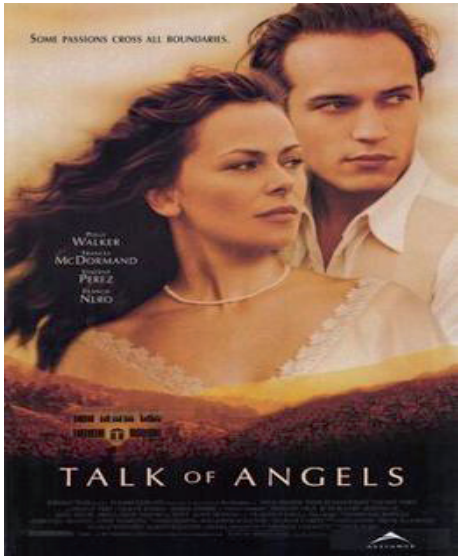
Poster for the film's release in UK cinemas. Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brooklyn_(film)
Trailer: https://youtu.be/15syDwCoook?si=QPeZ-9t2Kd49r9oU

of a new life and the fears and difficulties of being away from home. The narrative touches on themes such as the dream of a better future, culture shock, missing family and doubts about what to do with the future. Even though it's a fictional story, the film helps us to better understand what life is like for those who emigrate, the complexity of the experiences of many of the people in situations of exodus: from the fascination of living in a situation different from their origin (dreams and hope), the process of displacement, to the daily dilemmas of arrival (disenchantment, difficulty immersing oneself in the new context) and the reorganisation of the life process

Scene from Brooklyn
Photo: Reproduction

in cognitive, social and psychological terms. The film is capable of cinematically launching reflections on the social reality of migratory flows, regardless of their motivations: changing standards of living, fleeing political or religious problems, climatic disasters, among others.

Another film that offers representative elements on the issue of emigration and immigration is *Talk of Angels* (1998), based on the novel *Mary Lavelle* (1936) by Irish writer Kate O'Brien. Adapted by Ann Guedes and Frank McGuiness and directed by Nick Hamm (British filmmaker, born in Belfast, veteran of the theatre), the film presents the story of the young Mary Lavelle, who moves to Spain to work as governess to the three daughters of a wealthy and influential family in Spanish politics - the Areavagas).



https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Talk_of_Angels

Mary made this decision because the financial situation in her country was not favourable and she also wanted to get away from the tensions that dominated her country. However, when she arrived in Spain, Mary found the same political turmoil – the country was in the midst of a civil war. What's more, Mary falls in love with the family's son, which complicates things even more, as he is married. The film shows how Mary faces both the conflicts of the world around her and the personal and emotional dilemmas within herself.

Talk of Angels *(1998)*
Photo: Reproduction

The two films analysed, *Brooklyn* and *Talk of Angels*, are similar because their protagonists are women who have left their country of origin in search of better opportunities elsewhere. During this move, they face remarkable experiences and difficulties because they are far from their roots. The choice of these films is important, not only because they show immigrant women dealing with prejudices and stereotypes in another society, but also because they deal with themes such as identity and looking at the 'Other' (alterity). In addition, the films highlight the social and economic differences between the characters, as well as the ideas and beliefs that dominate each place. Even though they portray different characters, countries and cultures, the two films reveal social, historical and ideological aspects through their stories, giving more reality to what they show on screen. As a way of representing reality, these productions make us reflect on the challenges faced by those who migrate and cross borders.

There are many other films we could explore, but space is limited here. That's why I'm suggesting a few titles that are worth watching and discussing. They help give a voice to people who are

often ignored or treated as inferior in society – like immigrants, who face prejudice and social exclusion.

These films invite us to reflect and see these stories as forms of resistance and the fight for respect. Some examples are: *Angela's Ashes* (1999), *Once* (2006), *P.S. I love you* (2007), *Aisha* (2022), *Irish Wish* (2024), among others. Each of them has something important to say.

How about following these film tips?

Look for the recommended films and learn more about the stories of people who are seeking a new life in other countries. It is a great opportunity to reflect upon this global phenomenon that has been taking place since the beginning of the last century!

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https://pt.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ficheiro:Emigrants_Leave_Ireland_by_Henry_Doyle_1868.jpg

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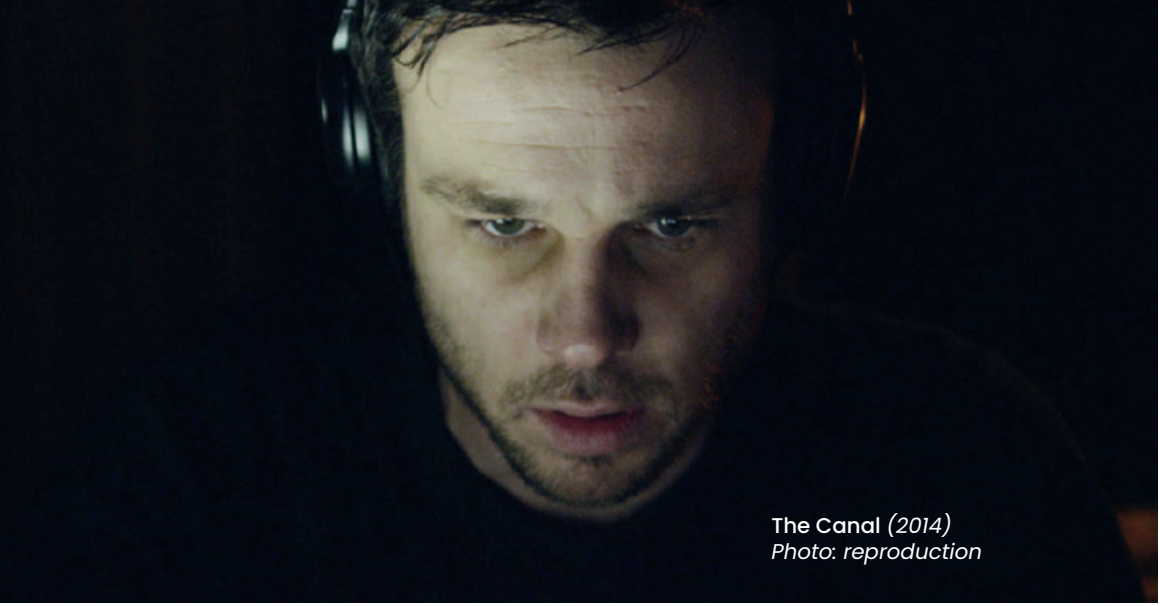
Irish Horror Cinema and Various Configurations of Fear

Sanio S. da Silva

Scene from Without Name *(2016). Photo: reproduction.*

Horror films tend to appeal to diverse audiences, but few people are aware of the Irish productions of this genre. In fact, the number is still very limited, especially compared to films from major Hollywood studios, but that does not mean the stories are uninteresting or any less frightening. Some Irish directors and screenwriters, for instance, work with the ecological horror subgenre. In these stories, evil arises from the environment, as if nature wishes to punish humans for centuries of exploitation. In Conor McMahon's *Dead Meat* (2004), the beautiful landscapes of the Irish countryside are infested by zombies. Thousands of people are infected, lose consciousness, and turn themselves into flesh-eating monsters. The story is disturbing, but there are moments of irreverence, especially when Coach Cheutan uses his stick of hurling, an Irish sport, to defend himself against zombies.



The Canal *(2014)*
Photo: reproduction

In ***Dead Meat***, a mysterious virus spreads and threatens the world as we know it, but nature can find other ways to punish humans. In Lorcan Finnegan's *Without Name* (2016), Eric is a surveyor hired by a mysterious company who becomes tormented by an entity emerging from the forest. The vegetation seems to have a consciousness and is watching Eric's every move. An ancient spirit tries to absorb him, leading him to suffer nightmares and hallucinations. The film evokes countless tensions amidst an unsettling atmosphere, making it a perfect choice for fans of psychological horror.

In Irish horror films, people are often tormented by ghosts from the unconscious. Unlike many American works, there are few sequences of extreme violence in Irish productions. In these stories, fear penetrates the deepest recesses of the mind, awakening disturbances in the viewer that would otherwise be unimaginable. ***The Canal*** (2014), written and directed by Ivan Kavanagh, is a psychological horror about David, an archivist who believes he is being haunted by the ghost of the murderer David Williams. At times throughout the story, it is almost impossible to distinguish between reality and delusion. The film plunges the audience into the mental turmoil of David, a man tormented by terrifying visions that put his entire family at risk.

Irish horror films are sometimes inspired by local folklore. One of the most common characters in these stories is the ***changeling.*** If fairies take an interest in a human baby, they plot to kidnap them, leaving one of their offspring in the cradle. Families trapped by these creatures are unlikely to rescue the child and, unfortunately, must live with an individual that has a repulsive appearance and inappropriate behavior. Lee Cronin wrote and directed ***The Hole in the Ground*** (2018), a film inspired by the ***changeling*** legend. Seeking a change of scenery, Sarah and her son Chris move to an isolated house. However, the boy begins to behave strangely, leading the young mother to believe he is actually an impostor. Chris becomes distant and, at times, disobedient and aggressive toward his mother. The story becomes even more terrifying when Sarah enters a hole in the ground, encounters the fairies, and attempts to rescue her son.

While Cronin's film depicts Sarah's anguish over whether a creature has taken her son's place, Kate Dolan's ***You Are Not My Mother*** (2020) approaches the ***changeling*** legend from a different

The Hole in the Ground
Photo: Reproduction

You are not my Mother *(2020)*
Photo: Reproduction

perspective. This time, an adult, not a child, is kidnapped by fairies. The teenage protagonist, Char, experiences disturbing moments after realizing that Angela, her mother, is no longer the same. The impostor tries to lure the young girl into the fairy world and puts other family members at severe risk. The story exemplifies the creativity of Irish filmmakers, capable of reviving and updating folk legends from the Celtic past.

While many horror films explore local traditions, Irish cinema also addresses fears that are present in various societies. It's common for young adults to express concerns about the future. For many, it's difficult to imagine living with a partner, having children, or buying a property. These anxieties emerge in the film ***Vivarium*** (2020), Lorcan Finnegan's second film. Tom and Gemma decide to visit condominium with a real estate agent. However, they are tricked and trapped in the location. Soon, the couple finds a baby inside a box and, apparently, they must raise it to regain their freedom. The film uses vibrant colors, and much of the footage takes place during the day. However, there are several terrifying moments, which sets it apart from other horror productions set in dark places or at night.

Vivarium *(2020)*
Photo: Reproduction

So far, it's clear that Ireland's scary films have a diverse range of facets. Filmmakers seem interested in different manifestations of fear, a trend that makes the stories increasingly surprising.

In Damian McCarthy's ***Oddity*** (2024), Darcy Odello is a blind clairvoyant who uses her paranormal skills to investigate the death of her twin sister, Dani. Seeking answers, she surprises her former brother-in-law, Ted Timmis, with a visit. He lives in an isolated house with his new girlfriend, Yana. However, Darcy does not seem to have arrived by herself. In a box, she brings a human-sized wooden doll, which seems to have a life of its own and envelops the characters in a suspenseful atmosphere. The film offers numerous surprises and disturbing moments. Secrets are kept until the very last scenes, a fact that makes *Oddity* an unsettling production from the first to the last second.

Oddity *(2024)*
Photo: Reproduction

If you are a horror fan, Irish cinema has a lot to offer. From stories about a possible zombie apocalypse to threats emerging from deep forests. Irish folklore is a regular feature of the films, making it easy to identify these productions as Irish. However, the creativity of directors and screenwriters goes beyond themes associated with local culture. The films address various forms of fear and, therefore, can appeal to diverse audiences. In Irish horror cinema, you will always find intriguing stories, plenty of scares, and many surprises.

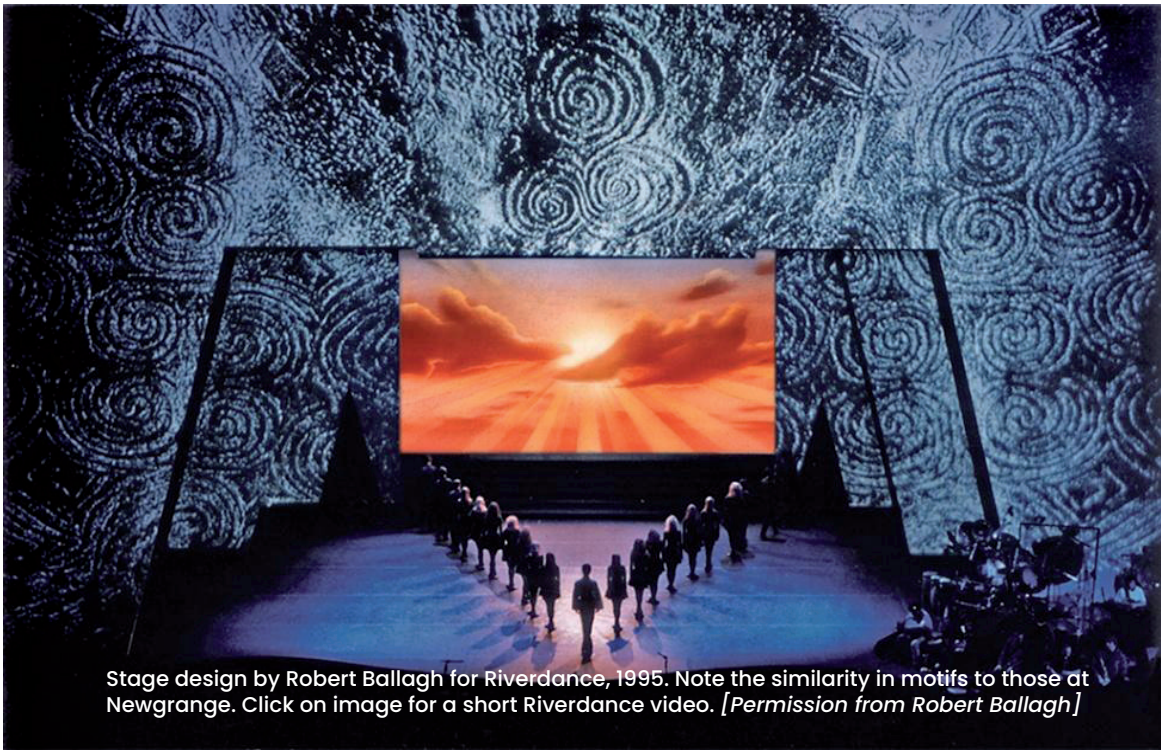
What about you? Do you enjoy horror films?

Are you interested in any of these films? What other horror classics have you seen or are interested in watching? Think of three works in this film genre and get some popcorn ready to go with them!

4. ART, CULTURE AND SPORTS

A History of Irish Art: From Prehistoric Carvings to Contemporary Expressions

William Shortall



Stage design by Robert Ballagh for Riverdance, 1995. Note the similarity in motifs to those at Newgrange. Click on image for a short Riverdance video. *[Permission from Robert Ballagh]*

The history of Irish art spans from the Neolithic period to the modern day, reflecting the cultural and political evolution of the island. One of the oldest and most iconic artistic sites in Ireland is the passage tomb of Newgrange, located in County Meath. Dating to around 3200 BC, this megalithic monument predates the Egyptian pyramids.

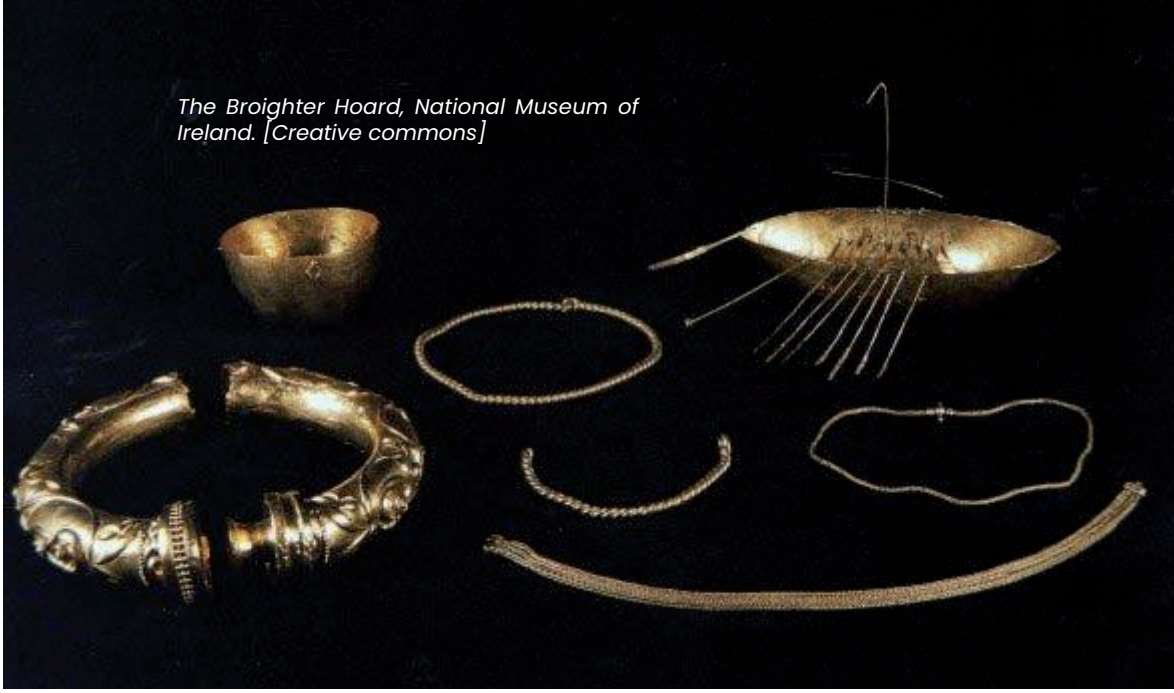
The stone surfaces at Newgrange are decorated with complex motifs – triple spirals, zigzags, chevrons, and lozenges – whose meanings remain mysterious. These carvings are among the earliest examples of art on the islands of Ireland and Britain and set a precedent for the symbolic visual language that would reappear in Irish art across centuries.

With the arrival of metalworking in Ireland during the Bronze Age (2500 BC to 500 BC) artisans began creating sophisticated weapons, and tools in bronze and ornamental objects in both bronze and gold. Their designs were dominated by geometric motifs.

The entrance passage and entrance stone with triple-spiral carved decoration. [Creative Commons]

The Iron Age in Ireland spans almost one thousand years from the end of the Bronze Age to the Early Christian Era during the fifth century AD. Referred also to the La Tène period, it introduced iron tools and marked the arrival of new peoples associated with Celtic tribes from mainland Europe to the island. This new culture would permanently enrich the native traditions, language, customs and art.

Among the many spectacular bronze and gold items in the National Museum of Ireland is the Broighter Hoard, c. 100 BC, found in County Derry. An example of pre-Christian craftsmanship, the collar from the hoard is decorated with stylised bird and horse motifs, raised ornament and incised concentric arcs, and the exquisite miniature boat indicates that it may have been a votive offering to a sea god.



The Broighter Hoard, National Museum of Ireland. [Creative commons]

Christianity arrived in Ireland around the fifth century AD, primarily through contact with Roman Britain. The resulting exposure to new influences meant that new styles and technical skills were acquired and added to the repertoire of Irish craftsmen. This new era of religious art required special objects, such as eucharistic chalices, patens, religious books and containers for the enshrinement of books and relics, fashioned and adorned by Irish craftworkers. This era also produced masterpieces in metal, such as the Ardagh Chalice, Moylough Belt Shrine, and the Tara Brooch. Meanwhile, high crosses adorned with figurative biblical scenes stood in monastic settlements, demonstrating the skill of Irish stone carvers, among the most spectacular Muiredach's Cross, County Louth. The combination of artistic excellence and spiritual devotion led scholars to refer to this time as the Golden Age of Irish art.

The Book of Kells, dating from around the eighth century, is the most famous illuminated manuscript from this period. It comprises the four Gospels of the New Testament in Latin, the universal language of the church across Europe. The manuscript exemplifies the fusion of Christian themes with earlier La Tène designs, also known as Insular decoration. Its elaborate pages feature intricate knots, mythical

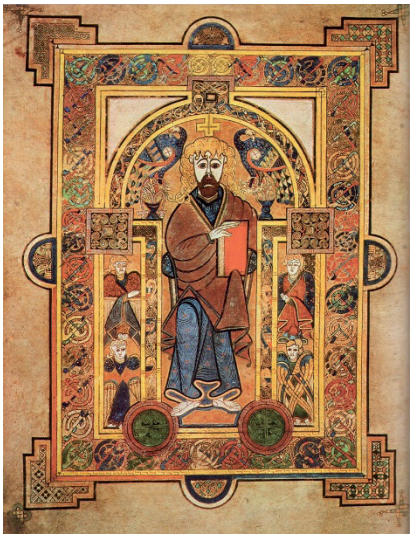
creatures, and vibrant colours – each element imbued with spiritual symbolism.

The exact origins of the *Book of Kells* are unknown, but it was likely started by monks on the Scottish island of Iona in a monastery founded in 561AD by St Columba, an Irish

The Ardagh Chalice, National Museum of Ireland. [Creative commons]

missionary. Iona was a centre of learning and spirituality in the early medieval period which attracted scholars and pilgrims from across Europe. Due to threats of invasion from the Viking raiders from Scandinavia and after a raid in the early 9th century that killed 68 monks, the surviving community fled to their sister monastery in Kells, County Meath, taking the manuscript with them. Today, the manuscript is on display to visitors in Trinity College Library, Dublin.

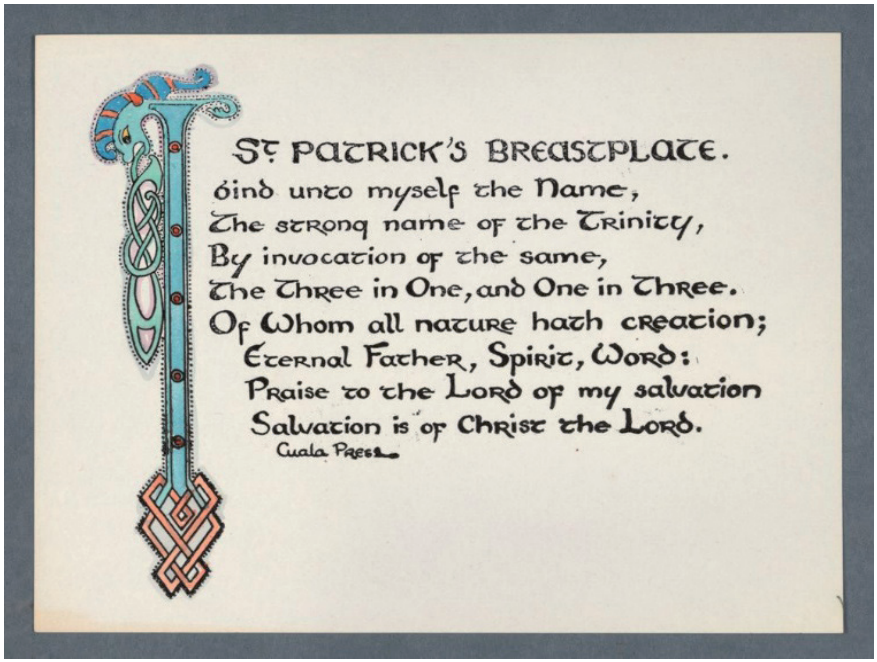
Colonisation of Ireland by the Anglo-Normans started in 1169 AD, the late medieval period, and resulted in the imposition of a new English ruling class.



Click on the image to access the Book of Kells *online as part of the Digital Collections of The Library of Trinity College Dublin.*

English lords established towns and brought craftsmen from abroad, but native artistic traditions persisted. Ireland remained subjugated for eight hundred years. The drive for independence, mostly achieved in 1922, after a violent decade of uprising and war, was fuelled by a cultural revival. This was most notable for revivals in literature, sport, theatre, and art. All of these looked to and reappropriated the pre-colonial past of the ancient independent nation to define a distinct culture for the new state.

In art this manifested itself by artists and craftspeople looking back to pre-colonial medieval and early Christian periods. *The Book of Kells* was particularly significant with its insular Celtic-type decoration reused and adapted in new forms. This was evident in the output from the Irish Arts and Crafts movement, led by studios, such as Dun Emer and Cuala founded by Evelyn Gleeson (1855-1944) and Lily (1866-1949)

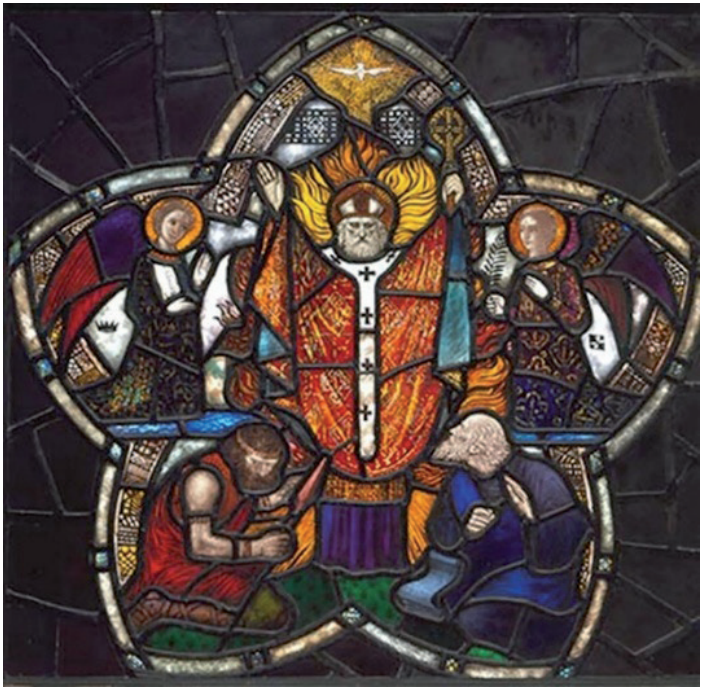

St PATRICK'S BREASTPLATE.
bind unto myself the Name,
The strong name of the Trinity,
By invocation of the same,
The Three in One, and One in Three.
Of Whom all nature hath creation;
Eternal Father, Spirit, Word:
Praise to the Lord of my salvation
Salvation is of Christ the Lord.
Cuala Press

Elizabeth C. Yeats (1868-1940) St Patrick's Breastplate prayer with Celtic style decorated capital letter. Handcoloured Cuala Press print. Trinity College Dublin.

and Elizabeth Yeats (1868-1940), sisters of the Nobel poet W. B. and the artist Jack. Craftspeople created objects with these distinctive motifs in a style that distinguishes it from British and other work through its appropriation of Celtic ornament and Irish motifs in a modern idiom.

Irish art projected a new independent state that claimed its unique identity and sovereignty from the ancient nation. Catholicism, embraced by the majority of the population, developed as a mark of national distinctiveness and resulted in many religious art works. This was notable in stained glass, for which Ireland developed an international reputation, with studios like An Túr Gloine and Harry Clarke Studios.

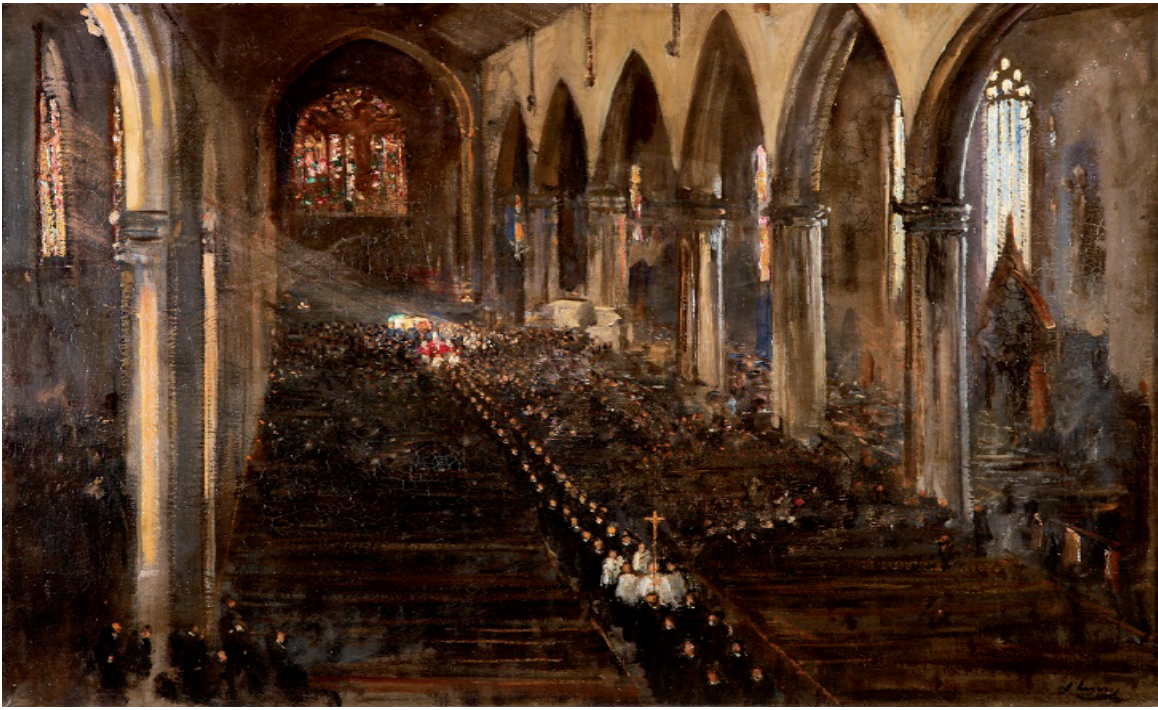
Visual artists of this period also played a role in nation-building and reflected the political aspirations of a new nation. Artist Jack Yeats



Michael Healy (1871 -1941), An Tur Gloine Studio, Saint Patrick at Slane, Saint Patrick Lighting the Paschal Fire *(1915).*

(1871-1957) painted scenes of everyday life showing a functioning state, Paul Henry (1877-1958) painted distinctive landscapes of the West of Ireland visually returning ownership of the land to those who lived and worked on it, John Lavery (1856-1941) painted portraits of Irish politicians in a government declared illegal by the British, a riposte to the well-worn colonial trope of Ireland being incapable of self-government. Many art works referenced English atrocities in Ireland, a nation facing the might of an empire and entitled to its independence, exampled by Lavery's painting of the funeral of Irish political martyr Terence MacSwiney, who died on hunger strike in a British prison.

Artists were among many in the population abhorred by the Irish Civil War (1922-23) and afterwards disengaged from politics. Despite



John Lavery, RHA, RA, RSA (1856-1941). Sketch for the Funeral of Terence MacSwiney, Lord Mayor of Cork 1920, *1920, oil on canvas, 61 x 75 cm. Crawford Art Gallery, Cork. [Permission from Crawford]*

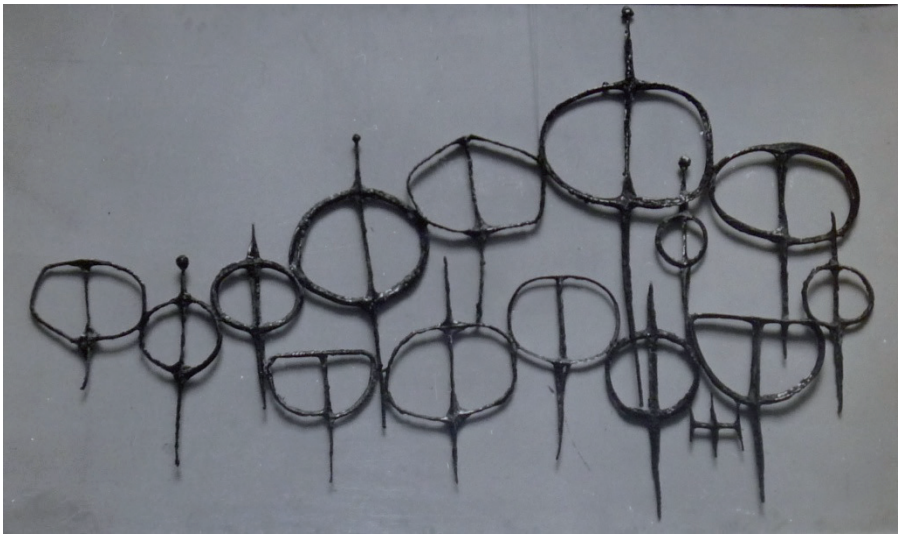
a conservative climate caused by financial stringency and religious control, a modernist movement emerged in the 1920s and 30s.

In his foreword to Dorothy Walker's *Modern Art in Ireland* (1997), the poet Seamus Heaney acknowledges the source of Irish modern art that emerged in the first half of the twentieth century, 'the headwaters of modern Irish abstract art began to gleam and discover a channel for themselves, the naiads of the source being Mainie Jellett and Evie Hone'. Jellett (1897-1944) was almost evangelical in promoting modern abstract and cubist art in a resistant Ireland, although it was well established in Europe at this time.

Mainie Jellett, Decoration *(1923), Tempera on wood panel, 89 x 53 cm. National Gallery of Ireland.*

Jellett's *Decoration* (1923), considered the first abstract painting shown in Ireland, was initially widely criticized. It is now in the National Gallery of Ireland's permanent collection. Over time, her synthesis of modern art with religious and Celtic imagery gained acceptance.

Jellett co-founded the Irish Exhibition of Living Art in 1943, providing a platform for the display of modern and contemporary art. In 1947, the IELA awarded a Mainie Jellett travel scholarship in her honour. Won by the young Irish sculptor, Hilary Heron (1923-77), it precipitated her becoming Ireland pioneering modernist sculptor. Heron's modernist sculpture sometimes drew on ancient Irish motifs, such as the markings on the Clonfinlough Stone, in County Offaly, reinterpreting them in abstract form.



Hilary Heron (1923-1977) Clonfinloch*, 1961. Bronze. 155cm. Fáilte Ireland. [Permission from Heron estate]*

Study Towards an Image of James Joyce. Museu de Arte Moderna, Rio de Janeiro.

Heron's work is an example of the interest in precolonial art among Irish modern artists, including Louis le Brocquy (1916-2012), and Nano Reid (1900-1981). Reid with Norah McGuinness (1901-1980) were the first artists to represent Ireland post-independence at the Venice Biennale in 1950, and le Brocquy was a prize-winner at Venice in 1956 when he represented Ireland along with Heron.

Clonfert Cathedral doorway is a pointed hood enclosing human heads.

Le Brocquy developed an international reputation and was the leading Irish artist of his generation. His work is in museums across the globe, and he donated three etchings to the Museu de Arte Moderna, Rio de Janeiro in 1980. These works, three studies towards images of notable modern writers, James Joyce, Samuel Beckett, and W. B. Yeats were part of a long series of head studies and pay homage to Ireland's rich literary tradition. Le Brocquy refers to

the old Celtic notion of the head as 'the magic box that contains the spirit' and this series of works expressed his desire to lay his finger on the pulse of the very earliest manifestation of art in Ireland, and to 're-show it in his own very different work'. His work referenced the carved Romanesque heads above the entrance to the twelfth century Clonfert Cathedral, County Galway, blending modern expression with historic symbolism.

On the world stage Ireland's primary cultural offering of literature and theatre, broadened to include music, visual art and dance. Irish artists such as Francis Bacon (1909-1992), Sean Scully (b. 1945), Eva Rothchild (b. 1971), Genevieve Figgis (b. 1972), operate in a global artistic environment and many base themselves in the world's major cities. The global phenomenon, Riverdance, seen live by over 30 million people in 49 countries, celebrates traditional Irish dance and music, its first performance in South America was in Brazil in 2012. The sets for the show were designed by renowned Irish artist Robert Ballagh (b. 1943) using stage visuals reminiscent of the Newgrange motifs, combining tradition with modern spectacle.

Irish art continues to evolve, reflecting the nation's complex past and vibrant present. From ancient stone carvings to global contemporary practices, each phase of Irish art speaks to a deep cultural continuity. Whether in illuminated manuscripts, stained glass windows, or modernist sculpture, Irish artists have consistently drawn on their rich heritage to create works of enduring beauty and meaning.

For further reading, see:

- Andrew Carpenter (General ed.), *Art and Architecture of Ireland, Royal Irish Academy, 2015*
- www.museum.ie
- www.tcd.ie/library/old-library/

Note: The author would like to acknowledge the support in writing this text of Dr Angela Griffith and colleagues in the Department of History of Art and Architecture at Trinity College Dublin.

Shape without Form: A Poetic Journey in the Presence of Painting

James Concagh

Brian Maguire's painting 'Valdemar's House' and his portraits of Valdemar and Valdeci and my painting 'Jabaquara I' – at the Triskel Arts Centre, Cork, Ireland, July 2023.

'A vida sem luta é um mar morto no centro do organismo universal'[1]

Machado de Assis

In July of 2023 I had the privilege of exhibiting my paintings alongside one of Ireland's most well-known Contemporary artists Brian Maguire at the Triskel Arts Center in Cork and at The Andrea Rehder Gallery in March 2024 here in São Paulo. The exhibitions were based on the project 'The House That Valdemar Built'. I had invited Brian to consider

Brian Maguire drawing the portrait of Valdemar in 2022 on location at Valdemar's House in Jabaquara, São Paulo

the project in 2020 in the middle of the Covid 19 pandemic and between 2020 and 2022 we worked on the proposal and eventually invited the Chicago based video artist, Robert Heishman, to join us.

Both Robert and Brian came to São Paulo in April 2022 to spend two weeks developing the project along with me. We visited Valdemar and members of his family every day. I wanted to celebrate the fact that Valdemar and his wife, Valdeci, had built their home from bits and pieces of wood and that over the years found the energy and resources to build their three story house and raise their family. Brian painted the façade of the house and made portraits of some members of the household while Robert filmed the interior of the house and portrayed the family going about their everyday routines. As the house had been an inspiration for many of my artworks over the years,

I focused on the more abstract elements of the construction itself. For my new series of paintings, 'Jabaquara', I asked for donations of old clothes from the family over a period of six months and cut the cloth into small squares to literally construct my paintings in much the same way that Valdemar constructed his house. These paintings would be the main body of work from this project. Both exhibitions were important landmarks for making people aware of the nature of popular housing within the context of communities. Although Valdemar represented so many other underprivileged laborers that constructed their homes on the outskirts of cities, he was brave enough to construct a home based on the individual needs of his own family. As I write this article, Brian is presently showing at the Hugh Lane Gallery in Dublin with a retrospective of his work from almost all of the countries he visited including Brazil.

Although I would have heard about Brian from my days studying at the National College of Design in Dublin, I had never met him. He had already graduated some five or six years before me. I would only meet for the first time when he came to São Paulo to represent Ireland at the 1998 São Paulo Biennale. Fortunately, my Portuguese was good enough at that time for me to translate and support him with his project based on the children of the shanty town Vila Prudente, São Paulo. The opportunity to watch Brian paint and draw portraits of children who were often victims of conflict and social dilemmas, was a great opportunity for me to understand painting in a new context. I began to witness painting not as an intellectual or analytical thing, but as a very fundamental form of expression. Brian's work seemed larger than life and his strong sense of using his artwork to register accounts of injustice in such places as South Sudan, Mexico, Northern Ireland, Arizona and São Paulo had a tremendous impact on me. His journalistic approach to his work allowed him to have access to so many extreme situations that would have been otherwise impossible to have had access to.

I came to learn that Brian was influenced by the American artist Edward Kienholz who was to have a strong impact on him as a social-political artist and as an expressionist painter. Unlike the artist

With Brian Maguire (middle) and Robert Heishman (right) ready to start the project 'The House that Valdemar Built' in April 2022, Pinheiros, São Paulo

Francis Bacon, who expressed strong elements of post war traumas and developed portraiture as a kind of physiological state of mind, Brian was more interested in a 'Goya' like approach to the world around him. While new governments and communities were being constructed, Brian was identifying the cracks and drawbacks of such regimes that were ignoring the victims that were being caught up in the cross-fire of conflicting power seeking strategies.

As much as I would have liked to have followed in Brian's footsteps and found a socio-political cause to associate with my art, I believe that my background and understanding of the world was not made of the same substance. I found inspiration from poets and writers and as much as I read about as many artists as I could, I related more to literature and philosophy. One of my first discoveries while studying at art college was Samuel Becket. I read as much of him as I could and found inspiration in almost every line he wrote. When he said 'To find a form that accommodates the mess, that is the task of the artist now', I was more convinced that this was how I saw the world around me. But to understand the 'mess' that I had

gotten into, I would need to reflect on my experiences as a child and as a young man.

My own Irish Immigrant background and living in London at the times of The Troubles had already meant that my world was not going to be a bed of roses. The feeling of not belonging and being so far from my relatives in Ireland created a sense of alienation. Life in working class East London was never easy, especially when my parents had five children to feed. Most of my friends at school were of Irish, Polish, Italian, Greek or Jamaican descent. Looking back now, I realize I was somehow born into a melting pot of change and cultural transformation. But to move forward, I made sure that I held onto my identity. I even adopted a kind of Che Guevara's concept of 'the peasant zone of self-defense'. Unfortunately, my new rebel spirit did not go down very well at school or with my friends and family.

Despite the pain and loss of my mother leaving home when I was just five years' old, I never gave up visiting her. It was only when she moved to the West End that I discovered how the other half lived. I saw the British people in a new light and, most of all, I began to discover their art galleries and museums. At around fifteen, apart from my interest in literature, I discovered art for the first time and I no longer felt like just another immigrant living in East London. The world had suddenly opened up to me and I could feel a new surge of energy running through my veins. The idea of coming from a broken home and a conflicting cultural background was no longer an issue. What mattered most was that I had activated my creative mind and discovered a new space and time in which to develop my ideas.

Regardless of my background in sculpture, the sunny climate and the strong sense of light on the tropic of Capricorn in a city like São Paulo were to have a profound impact on me. My move to Brazil made me more conscious of the physical impact of textured surfaces and although I had studied sculpture at art college, I would eventually turn to painting in 1995. But before I did so, I took advantage of collecting objects around the streets of São Paulo and in scrap

yards to make my series of sculptures 'Fish, Triangle and Circle' and 'Sailing to Byzantium'.

Although I had always been fond of Yeats, it was around my time of adapting to my new life that I recalled his poem 'Sailing to Byzantium'. It had inspired me to make a journey around my neighborhood and collect a series of found objects. I was very moved by the lines;

> An aged man is but a paltry thing,
> A tattered coat upon a stick, unless
> Soul clap its hands and sing, and louder sing
> For every tatter in its mortal dress,
> Nor is there singing school but studying
> Monuments of its own magnificence;
> And therefore I have sailed the seas and come
> To the holy city of Byzantium.

As a sculptor, I was fascinated by the different objects that I found around the city. The found object (originally named by the French artist Marcel Duchamp) had become an important element for me to develop new ideas and construct my sculptures. The notion of a 'paltry thing' and 'a coat upon a stick' suggested a sense of fragility that I wanted to place in my series of artworks by including objects that had been discarded on the streets or in metal skips at the side of the road. But I imagined Yeats journey as a cyclical thing and not as a singular experience. It felt as though he had been on the same journey throughout his life and that he was simply reliving it all over again. For this reason, I cut out wooden circles as the central part of the sculptures and placed a series of found objects around them to suggest a cyclical movement.

Although I felt that my transition from sculpture to painting would be easy, it proved to be extremely hard and challenging. I began by reading more about the history of painting and took a course with the art critic Rodrigo Naves to understand art in the context of Brazilian history. I struggled to find a specific theme to work from in the studio.

In front of my painting 'Abrigo V' *mixed media technique on canvas – 250 cm x 200 cm – 2017*

I went from figurative to abstract forms and then eventually I painted over these to build up one layer after another without any particular direction. It was only when I read Rodrigo Naves book *A Forma Difícil* that I came to understand why it was so hard to create a form in a country that had such a varied and rich cultural background. Around 1999, I became tired of any sense of representation and colour and found inspiration in the words of Elizabeth Bishop when she wrote:

> What one seems to want in art, in experiencing it, is the same thing that is necessary for its creation, a self- forgetful, perfectly useless concentration.

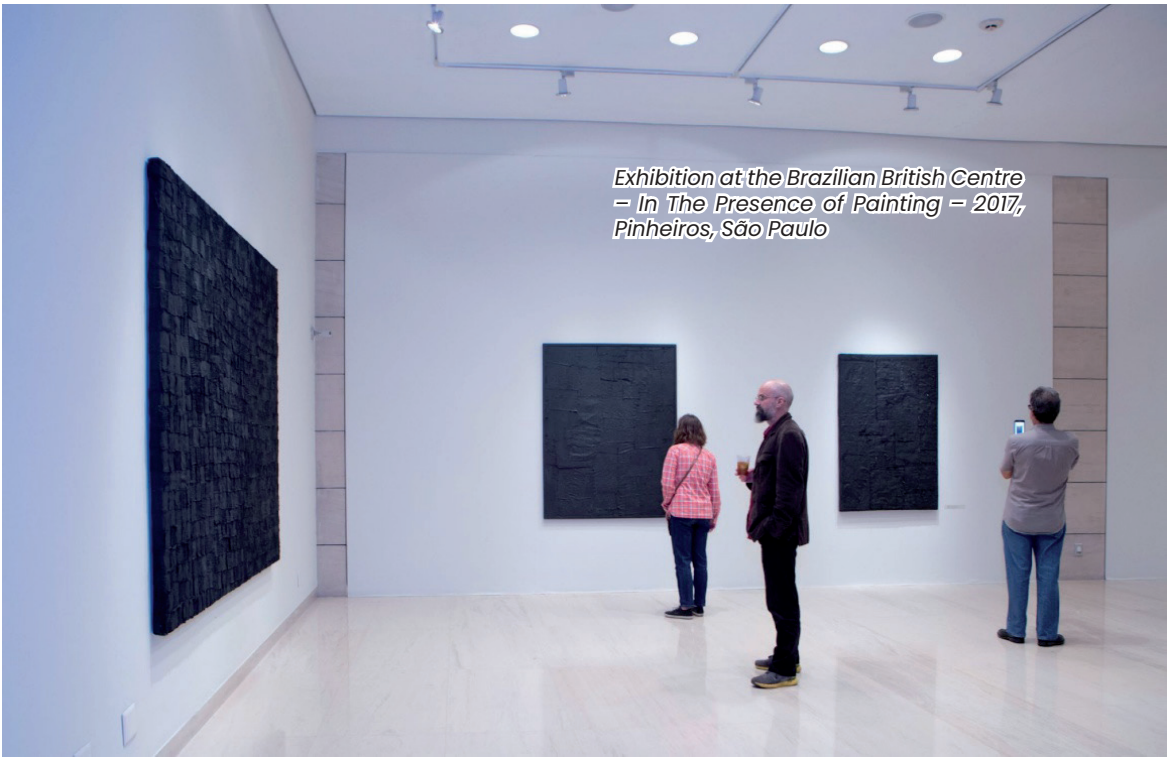
Despite the fact that I had based most of my concepts and creative ideas on a type of narrative, Bishop's words would eventually open my mind to a new approach to painting. I became interested

in the idea of a type of static and non-functional composition or as TS Eliot put it in his poem The Hollow Men:

> Shape without form, shade without colour,
> Paralysed force, gesture without motion.

Despite moving away from figurative painting and finding refuge in a more abstract approach to developing new compositions, it seemed to become more difficult to find any sense of form. The curator and art critic Elza Ajzenberg was sensitive enough to write the following about my new series of paintings:

> In this series of works, the sculptural formation of the artist brings about a searching for forms not only through the eyes, but also through tact. The abstract exercise is the basis, in particular the suprematist wiping out of the image that is immediately present. *To represent* and then *wipe-out* is the method adopted by Concagh.



Exhibition at the Brazilian British Centre – In The Presence of Painting – 2017, Pinheiros, São Paulo

Although I had been very fortunate to find a group of Brazilian painters from different parts of the country and to have had the privilege to exhibit with them in group shows here in São Paulo, it was not until I witnessed the work of the Venezuelan artist Armando Reverón at the 1988 São Paulo Biennale that I really started to find myself as a painter. I had the good fortune to see a complete collection of his paintings. Reverón gave me the courage to move forward with the idea of constructing my compositions by building up surfaces and textures and then 'wiping them out' to start all over again. A year later, I made a series of compositions entitled 'Vagos'. Using a lime mix, I simply built up one surface at a time after washing and scrubbing each layer. This series of large paintings were eventually purchased by the Brazilian British Centre in São Paulo. Some of these paintings were also shown alongside a fellow countryman, Sean Scully. Many years later, The British Brazilian Centre invited me to put on another individual showing of eighteen paintings in 2017. All of these paintings were hand stitched canvases painted with a dark pitch paint formula to emphasize the variety of textured surfaces. The exhibition was appropriately called 'In the Presence of Painting'.

In Seamus Heaney's collection of poems *Door into the Dark*, his poem 'Peninsula' touched me in terms of suggesting the same type of vagueness that I was experiencing in my studio:

When you have nothing
more to say, just drive
For a day all round the
peninsula
The sky is tall as over a
runway,
The land without marks,
so you will not arrive"

Ireland and Brazil: a cultural dialogue

Ever since I met Heaney at the Sligo Festival of Poetry in West Ireland in 1984, his poems have had a big impact on my artworks because of how much I am able to read into them in a visual way. His poem 'Digging' brought back clear memories of when I would spend time digging in the garden with my father.

In more ways than one, poetry, literature and philosophy have given me a different perspective in the way in which I go about making my artworks, especially when the real world becomes too real to me. It seems that I had to invent some kind of filter through which to see the world. Unlike Brian Maguire, I was not cut out to address socio-political issues around me. Instead, poetry, literature and philosophy had given me this filter to be close enough to things without necessarily romanticing them. It was the kind of distance that I needed to develop my body of works during these last twenty years. I guess that's why my art is essentially about finding things as I go along and creating abstract textured surfaces that have a human element to them. With the growth of technology and communication as well as the production of more and more images across social media, I believe that it will become more difficult to have any perspective on things in the future without taking one or two steps back from it all.

Source link

Criação / Artes Visuais • Estud. av. 13 (35) • Abr 1999 • https://doi.org/10.1590/S0103-40141999000100021

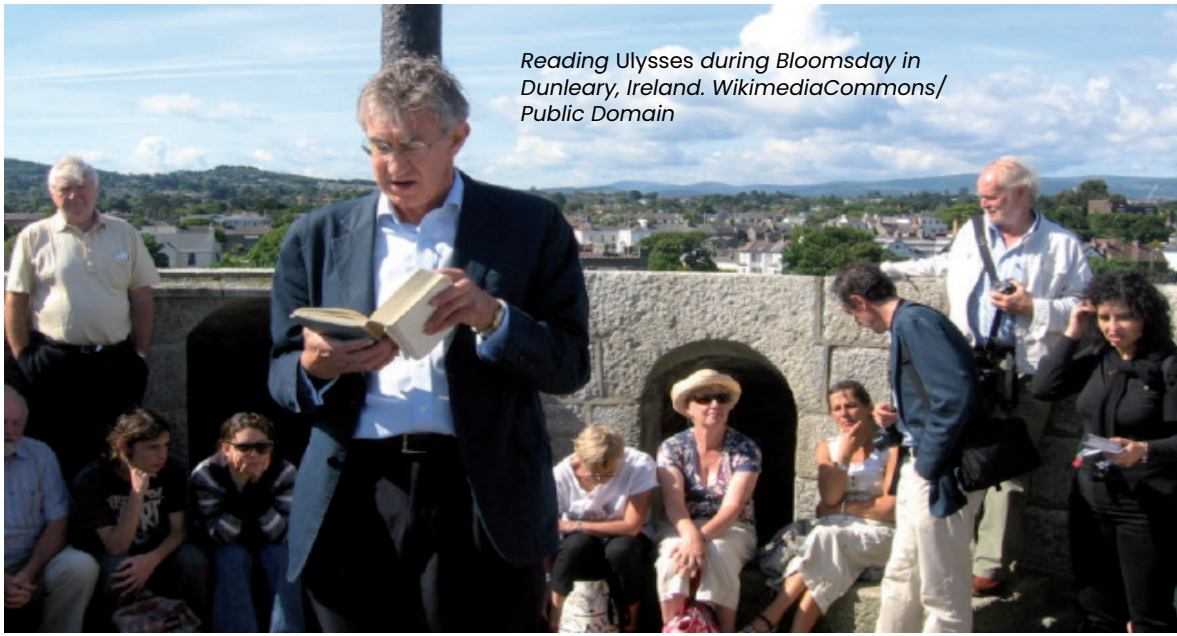
Dantas Studio and the preparation for Concagh's work 'Vagos'.
Photo: Personal collection.

Note

1 'Life without struggle is a dead sea in the centre of the universal organism.' (Machado de Assis)

Bloomsday – The Day of Bloom

Munira H. Mutran



Reading Ulysses *during Bloomsday in Dunleary, Ireland. WikimediaCommons/ Public Domain*

Since the publication of *Ulysses* (1922) by James Joyce, the protagonist of the novel, Leopold Bloom, has become one of the most well-known and celebrated literary figures in the world. Bloom's wanderings, adventures, and misadventures across the streets of Dublin on June 16th, 1904, are remembered to this day—even though the Bloomsday celebrations began in Paris in the 1920s, organized by Joyce's friends.

Bloomsday was celebrated in Dublin for the first time in 1954; since then, celebrations have become increasingly creative each year. The 1982 event marked the centenary of the birth of Joyce and

Edição comemorativa do
12º Bloomsday paulistano – 1999
JOYCE REVÉM
Incluindo O Poço do Falcão, peça de W. B. YEATS
JOYCE NO BRASIL
Organização:
Munira Mutran
e Marcelo Tápia
Antologia Bloomsday 1988-1997
Fragmentos da obra de James Joyce em apresentação multilíngüe
Programas, textos e imagens dos dez anos de comemoração paulistana no dia 16 de junho
Ensaios de autores brasileiros sobre Joyce e sua obra
Apresentação de Haroldo de Campos
Olavobrás / Abei
ABEI Journal
THE BRAZILIAN JOURNAL OF IRISH STUDIES
HUMANITAS
Number 14
November 2012

Examples of the publications celebrating Bloomsday in São Paulo

took place alongside the James Joyce Symposium, during which Jorge Luis Borges delivered a tribute to the author of *Ulysses*.

In São Paulo, the cultural significance of the event dates back to 1988, when the poet Haroldo de Campos and the author of this text organized a reading of Joycean work at Finnegans Pub. From that point on, Bloomsday in São Paulo began to feature not only readings of poems and excerpts from *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake* in English, Portuguese, French, German, Japanese, Korean, and other languages, but also introduced works by other Irish authors, as well as Irish music and dance. The variety of the program can be seen in the invitations for Bloomsday 1992 and 1995. This series of events led to publications such as *Joyce no Brasil* (1997), *MultiJoyce* (1998), *Joyce Revém* (1999), and *Ulisses: a Travessia Textual* (2001). Every June 16 throughout the years, we have sought to bring Joyce out of the academic sphere and – surrounded by other Irish writers like Wilde, Yeats, and Beckett – take him to the audience of São Paulo. For the wide range of activities, we had the support of musicians, artists, writers, colleagues from the University of São Paulo (USP), translators such as Haroldo and

Photo: Statue of Joyce in Trieste, Italy, where he lived in his youth. Wikimedia Commons/Public Domain

Augusto de Campos, as well as Arnaldo Antunes, Bete Coelho, Giulia Gam, Gerald Thomas, Alberto Marsicano, and many others; Renée Gumiel and Christine Greiner stood out in dance performances, and the Mawaka Group in Irish songs and ballads.

The great importance of promoting Irish culture in São Paulo was acknowledged by the Irish poet Paul Durcan. When he visited USP in 1994 for a reading of his poems, he was invited to take part in the São Paulo Bloomsday; he would later publish a poem in the book *Greetings to Our Friends in Brazil* (1999) recounting his experience—a

poem titled "The Daring Middle-Aged Man On The Flying Trapeze"[1]. At the end of the poem, a surprising remark:

> James Joyce is the only man in the world who comprehends women
> Who comprehends that a woman can never be adumbrated,
> Properly praised
> Except by a Japanese actor
> In Finnegan's Pub in São Paulo
> Declaiming extracts from *Ulysses*.

Over time, Joyce's work became so popular that it was adapted into plays, films, cartoons, and comics – such as *Joyce for Beginners* (1994) by David Morris and Carl Flint.

The 2004 Bloomsday was a moving tribute to Haroldo de Campos, who had passed away in 2003. The Celtic harp, the Coralusp choir, the Irish Dreams group, and an exhibition on Joyce were part of the June 12-16 program held at Casa Yayá, at CINUSP, at the Camargo Guarnieri auditorium, and the History Department auditorium at USP. A lecture by Irish historian Joe Lee and a discussion on *Ulysses*, the film, brought the event to a close. Thus, the path that initially led from the academy to the São Paulo community eventually brought us back to the university. The cycle was then complete.

Translated by Priscila Borges Rodrigues

1 *ABEI Journal* vol. 22, n. 2, dez 2020.

A Joyful Trajectory

Marcelo Tápia

This brief article is, as a matter of fact, an amalgam of references to events that pervades a history of nearly four decades and of impressions gathered during my experience with Bloomsday in São Paulo.

In this voyage through the journeys of Mr. Bloom – 'Jornadas do Senhor Dom Flor' as Haroldo de Campos would call them, in the wintry 'pauliceia', nearly always 'chilldamp' ('friúmida') on June 16 – each year I anticipated the celebration as a striking and intense experience that warmed my heart and many others'. The sensations

remain vivid in my memory, as do many of the scenes I witnessed: how could I forget the concentrated, warm atmosphere of the many voices at Finnegan's Pub on Cristiano Vianna Street, alongside the clinking of plates and glasses? Or the hectic preparations for the event, which included improvising bleachers by placing chairs on top of tables in order to accommodate the audience that arrived early to get a seat? The evening openings by Munira Mutran? The eagerly awaited speeches and readings by Haroldo, such as – among others – unpublished translated excerpts of *Finnegans Wake*? The dramatic performances in the cramped space? The Irish songs? The multilingual, polyphonic choruses of translated fragments from *Ulysses* simultaneously read in a myriad of Western and Eastern languages? The readings in English by John Milton? The songwriters and musicians who, year after year, closed the event, often with the apotheosis of the zither of Alberto Marsicano? My own apprehension as everything unfolded while I hosted the program for years on end?

There are many faces and names, voices and songs that have celebrated James Joyce – almost all of his work has been represented in various ways throughout the editions of the event – and other Irish writers, in prose, verse, and performance: W. B. Yeats, Oscar Wilde, Bernard Shaw, and Samuel Beckett, to name a few. The scene featuring actresses Bete Coelho, Lu Grimaldi, and Muriel Matalon in Beckett's 'dramaticule' *Come and Go* remains vivid, for example, such as the dramatic reading of Yeats's *The Hawk's Well* by Bete, Muriel and Christine Greiner... From Joyce's work, the evocation of Molly Bloom through the many interpretations of the final part of her monologue in *Ulysses*, presented over the years, will always be memorable...

The endless sensory and reflective impressions fostered by the experiences of São Paulo's Bloomsday – which have been an invigorating part of my life and have shaped me in many ways through constant discoveries (including within Joyce's own inexhaustible work) – will always stay with me: after a long journey through the Joycean pub in São Paulo, the more extensive programs we organized at *Casa das Rosas*, Haroldo de Campos Poetry and Literature Space, and at *Casa Guilherme de Almeida* were also exceptionally significant

and memorable for many who took part in them, I'm sure: speakers, readers, actors, performers, musicians, and so many partners came together to devise the exuberant literary mosaics presented in these house-museums of São Paulo.

Haroldo de Campos, Munira Mutran e Marcelo Tápia / Photo: Personal Collection

'Only with great love,' Haroldo de Campos told me over the phone in May 2003, after I answered his question about which edition of Bloomsday would be held that June 16: the 16th, the last edition graced by his presence, within a history of remarkable success and media attention that continued – despite the deep sense of loss following the poet's passing in August of that year.

Alongside Munira Hamud Mutran, Haroldo initiated this tradition in our city: Bloomsday in São Paulo was born in 1988, thanks to the initiative of these two people, at Finnegans Pub on Alameda Itú – the

choice of a pub, as clarified by the founders, stemmed from their intention to hold the celebration outside the academic setting. In the following years, Bloomsday came to be held at another Finnegans Pub, on Cristiano Vianna Street in the Pinheiros neighborhood, whose owner, Mário Fuchs (a 'tavern keeper,' as they used to say), became a regular collaborator and supporter of the event, hosting it for decades.

The first Bloomsday in São Paulo aimed to fulfill a purpose: the founding of the Brazilian Association of Friends of James Joyce, which was to become the Brazilian Association of Irish Studies – ABEI, affiliated with the University of São Paulo (USP). Thus, in the 1988 Bloomsday the founding charter of the Association was officially drawn up, recorded by Carmen de Arruda Campos, Haroldo's wife, who would then carry out similar work for each edition of the event, compiling information in a notebook. Carmen brought this task to a

Newspaper Folha de São Paulo. *Ilustrada. Photo: Personal collection*

Evento homenageia Joyce e funda associação de estudos irlandeses

Folha Ilustrada 16/6/88

Depois que James Joyce publicou o "Ulysses", em 1922, o dia 16 de junho deixou de ser um dia qualquer. Foi neste dia, em 1904, que o escritor Leopold Bloom se transformou no perso-

Florescer Pub.

O evento marca o início das atividades da Associação Brasileira de Estudos Irlandeses, presidida pela professora de literatura inglesa e irlandesa da USP, Maria Matran. Além de homenagear Joyce, a associação pretende difundir a obra de autores como Beckett e Yeats no Brasil.

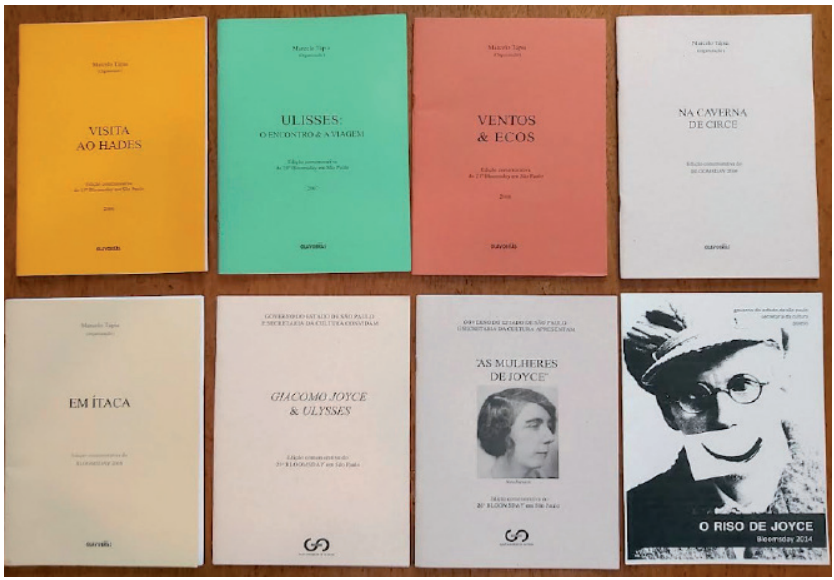
Em entrevista à Folha, o poeta e tradutor Haroldo de Campos,

Pub começa com a leitura de trechos do romance "Retrato de um Artista Quando Jovem" (1916), traduzido ao Brasil em 1945. Serão lidas em português algumas das cartas enviadas por Joyce escritas para sua então namorada Nora Barnacle.

Haroldo de Campos e os articulistas da Folha Nelson Ascher e Régis Bonvicino farão

close by documenting the final edition in which Haroldo took part, in 2003. The first page contains signatures collected from participants at the inaugural São Paulo Bloomsday, beginning with the signature of Munira H. Mutran, followed by that of Haroldo Eurico Butler Browne de Campos (his full name, highlighting his Irish heritage), along with those of other figures from the cultural scene at the time. A photocopied handout was distributed to those in attendance, containing the event's program.

The year 1989 saw the founding of ABEI, the Brazilian Association of Irish Studies at FFLCH-USP, and from that year until 2004, it led the organization of Bloomsday in São Paulo. The Association brings together members from various Brazilian universities and it was founded in order to pursue the goal of publishing the *ABEI Journal* annually, in addition to promoting academic exchange.

I started taking part in Bloomsday in 1992, with the aim of contributing to the edition of booklets that included, in addition to the program, texts that were to be read during the event. From that year on, we published the booklets through the Olavobrás publishing house — founded in the 1980s by poet Luis Dolhnikoff and myself; the booklets were distributed to the audience at the Finnegans Pub.

Cid Campos and Marcelo Tápia
Personal collection.

These publications later evolved into books, which were always offered at no cost to those attending Bloomsday: for the tenth edition of the São Paulo event in 1997, Munira Mutran and I organized the volume *Joyce no Brasil* [*Joyce in Brazil*] , published by Olavobrás in collaboration with ABEI. The book provided a history of the celebration up to that date (portraying documents and images), besides essays on the work of James Joyce. Especially significant for marking the first decade of Bloomsday in São Paulo, this book featured a foreword written by Haroldo de Campos, from which I quote a few excerpts – not only to recall the beauty of his writing, but also to praise Haroldo's deep appreciation for the event and his tireless devotion to it:

> On the blessed day of June 16, 1904, the Jewish-Hungarian-Irish Leopold Bloom, Mr. Bloom (translated to Brazilian Portuguese as Mr. Dom Flor), took a memorable walk around the city of Dublin, crossed by the River Liffey. [...]
>
> All over the world, admirers of Joyce celebrate Bloomsday on June 16, the "Day of Bloom," or as I prefer to say, the "Journey of Mr. Dom Flor." At Gotham Book Mart in New York; at Shakespeare and Co. in Paris; at the James Joyce Pub in Zurich; and at Finnegan's Pub in our São Paulo de Piratininga, founded in 1554 by Father Anchieta, a pre-Joycean polylingual Jesuit. Currently, even in Dublin – where for a long time the

literature of this brilliant Irishman was taboo – the date is celebrated at the recently created Joycean Studies Center in the city [...]
The *pièce de résistance* of Bloomsday festivities is always a multilingual reading of Joyce's texts. [...]

In fact, worldwide, Joyce has managed to break through the traditionalist bias barrier [...]

I, a native of São Paulo with roots in Ireland and Bahia (Butler Browne), would be remiss not to mention – on this bloomingly conspicuous celebratory date for Joyce in Brazil – that my favorite narrative by Jorge Amado, *The Two Deaths of Quincas Wateryell* (*A Morte e a Morte de Quincas Berro D'Água*), coincidentally draws inspiration from the same ancient legend of the dead boozer brought back to life by splashes of an alcoholic libation—be it *aguardente* or whiskey. In Joyce's case, it is the clumsy hod-carrier Tim Finnegan (whence *Finnicius Revém*, *Finnegans Wake*, *Finn again wakes*, *Velório* – Wake, and *Re-Vida do Gigante Finn* – Re-Life of the Giant Finn). I have loosely translated the chorus of the Irish folk ballad that inspired Joyce:

Lots of fun at Finnegans Wake

Whack fol the dah will ya dance to yer partner
Around the flure yer trotters shake
Wasn't it the truth I told you?
Lots of fun at Finnegan's Wake

With this motto as a catchphrase, let us drink in celebration to Joyce for the Tenth Bloomsday, held at Finnegan's Pub in São Paulo, in the Pinheiros neighborhood. And let us take this opportunity to wish for this memorable book, ***Joyce no Brasil,*** to be the first of a series. Each new anniversary of the ***peregrinatio*** of Mr. Bloom (Senhor Dom BloomFlor), a new rejoycean booklet.

São Paulo de Piratininga
May 1997

Following *Joyce no Brasil* came *MultiJoyce* (1998) and *Joyce Revém* (1999) – which I organized –, besides the CD *Irish Dreams* (2000), featuring traditional Irish music (an unwavering presence at

the events with various guests, as was the theater of Irish authors)– which I produced alongside musicians Daniel Szafran, Cíntia Scola, and Sílvia Zambon. The CD included Haroldo's reading of two excerpts translated by him (unpublished then) from *Finnegans Wake*, as well as a reading by actress Bete Coelho of the previously mentioned final part of the monologue of Molly Bloom from *Ulysses*, in Haroldo de Campos's translation. In the last year of the 20th century, due to particular circumstances, Bloomsday was held at the then-operating Cervejaria Continental, with its customary strong turnout.

The book *Ulisses – a travessia textual*, organized by Haroldo himself, was published for the 2001 Bloomsday, held back again at

Bloomsday 30th anniversary event Photo: Personal collection

Finnegan's Pub; in 2002 it was followed by the book *Junijornadas do Senhor Dom Flor*, organized by Munira and I, and offered to the participants of that year's event along with the CD *Whiskey in the Jar* by the group Irish Dreams. In 2003, at the request of Haroldo de Campos, we published the book *O Lusobrasileirês no Finneganês* by Antonio Carlos Araújo Cintra, a vocabulary of the Portuguese

language in Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*; at that year's celebration, the CD *Irish Dreams Live* was given to the attendees. Haroldo's participation was unforgettable – he remained at the Pub until the end of the event, despite being unwell.

After Munira H. Mutran stepped down from organizing Bloomsday in 2004 – the year we published the booklet *James Joyce: um breve itinerário de leitura*, which I wrote – I continued coordinating the event alongside Haroldo's son, Ivan de Campos. Starting in 2005, the Bloomsday program expanded beyond Bloom's Day itself: initially, *Casa das Rosas* (*Espaço Haroldo de Campos de Poesia e Literatura*) was hosting part of the program, which over the years came to be held not only there but also at *Casa Guilherme de Almeida* – both literary house – museums managed by the São Paulo State Government, which I had the opportunity to direct. The publication of booklets continued, with a new design aiming to reflect the guiding principle chosen for the programs; each year, based on chapters of *Ulysses*, a central theme for the celebration was selected: *Visit to Hades* (*Visita ao Hades,* 2006), *Ulysses: the meeting & the journey* (*Ulisses: o encontro & a viagem*, 2007), *Winds & echoes* (*Ventos & ecos*, 2008), *In Circe's cave* (*Na caverna de Circe*, 2009), *In Ithaca* (*Em Ítaca*, 2010), *James Joyce & Ulysses* (*Giacomo Joyce & Ulysses*, 2012) and *The Women of Joyce* (*As mulheres de Joyce*, 2013). From then on, for various reasons, we began offering the public just printed programs. In 2016, Finnegan's Pub – under new ownership – no longer took part in the celebrations in our city.

In 2020 and 2021, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the celebration of Bloomsday was held remotely by São Paulo's literary houses and museus, and, following our tradition, included readings of Joyce's work in various languages. The online format allowed for the participation of people from different parts of Brazil and abroad.

Since its foundation, the São Paulo Bloomsday has sparked the organization of similar events in many other cities across the country – its celebration in capitals and other locations in numerous states is worth checking online. This is its main legacy: encouraging the reading and discussion of the works of James Joyce, as well as

honoring Irish culture and literature. It is worth noting that on several occasions the event in São Paulo was supported by companies of Irish origin, such as Jameson Irish Whiskey and Guinness beer, as well as by the Consulate of Ireland in Brazil, whose representatives actively participated in the events.

Over time, besides those figures already mentioned, many others have taken part in São Paulo's Bloomsday, through readings and performances – such as Aurora F. Bernardini, Augusto de Campos, Cid Campos, Yun Jung Im, Arnaldo Antunes, Nelson Ascher, Caetano W. Galindo, Donaldo Schüler, Grupo Mawaka, Aidan Boyle, Luis Donhnikoff, Lenerson Polonini, Toshi Tanaka, Augusta Vono, Donny Correia, Wellington Nogueira, Irlemar Chiampi, Leyla Perrone-Moisés, Wille Bolle, Alice K., Sérgio Medeiros, Dirce Waltrick do Amarante, Jaa Torrano, André Malta, Horácio Costa, Breno Sebastiani, Christian Werner, Julio Mendonça, Péricles Cavalcanti, Arthur Nestrovski, Livio Tragtenberg, Carlos Rennó, Edvaldo Santana, Lúcio Agra, Felipe Ávila, Daniel Tápia, Grace Gianoukas, Moacir Amâncio, Maria Teresa Quirino, Alzira Allegro, Eliane Fittipaldi, Tereza Jardini, Rodrigo Bravo, Amara Moira, Reynaldo Damazio, Banda Oran, Tunas Celtic Band, the Theatre Company Estrela D'Alva, the Theatre Company Vento Áureo, among

many others whose presence enriched the Joycean celebrations – unfortunately a list too numerous to be accommodated here in full.

In recent years, after several occasional initiatives by the W. B. Yeats Chair of Irish Studies at FFLCH-USP, Bloomsday celebration programs have come to take place regularly at the University of São Paulo itself, thanks to the work of Laura Izarra (a long-time collaborator in the history of the event), among other members of the Chair. The centenary celebrations of *Ulysses*, in 2022, featured an extensive program at the University, which also engaged in dialogue with events held at *Casa Guilherme de Almeida* and *Casa das Rosas*. At the latter venue, the event once again featured a performance by Bete Coelho, who was preparing to premiere the monologue *Molly Bloom*, later staged at Sesc Paulista. That year, the booklet *Enjoycíada* was handed out, featuring a poem of my own authorship evoking James Joyce and his work. For several years, the garden of Casa das Rosas set a festive wake scenario for Tim Finnegan, suggesting his reawakening to life – a way of conjuring both the Irish ballad and the novel *Finnegans Wake*, along with the eternal resurgence of Joyce and his characters.

The São Paulo Bloomsday stemming from the lineage that began at Finnegan's Pub came to an end in 2024 with its 37th edition. Although I did not participate in the event due to my departure from the direction of São Paulo's literary house-museums, I was responsible for preparing the program (which was carried out by Julio Mendonça and Rodrigo Bravo). The last edition I participated in was therefore in 2023, when we focused on the theme of return in *Ulysses* ('Homecoming', 'A volta para casa'), as well as aspects of the "father and son" relationship drawn from the novel. At that event, I performed 'Danny Boy,' the first Irish song I sang at a Bloomsday in the 1990s. Thus, with this popular 'anthem of Ireland,' I 'wrapped up' my contribution to this series to which so many have contributed and dedicated themselves over time, with the commitment and love that James Joyce and his work deserve.

Bloomsday celebration at the University of São Paulo in 2018. Photo: Personal collection

In the words of Munira Mutran (in her article 'A recepção de James Joyce no Brasil'), 'time and, ironically, Joyce's followers or imitators have made accessible what was once illegible.' ['o tempo e, ironicamente, os seguidores ou imitadores de Joyce tornaram acessível o que era ilegível']. I conclude this brief account wishing that the celebration of those who follow the eternal art of James Joyce will go on uninterrupted and have a very long life (*ars longa*!) at the University of São Paulo.

April 2025

Translated by Priscila Borges Rodrigues

Irish Sport

Mike Cronin

Hurling match between two Irish teams Photo: Wikimedia/Public Domain

Ireland is very passionate about its sports. The major sports in terms of participation rates and spectators are those of the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA), namely Gaelic football and hurling. These games are indigenous sports that began in Ireland in 1884, although archaeological records show that a form of hurling was played 2000 years ago. The Gaelic Athletic Association competes with the international sports of soccer and rugby. For an island of just over 7 million people Ireland has high rates of sporting participation and competes successfully at the international level in rugby, has had years of success and attendance at the World Cup in soccer, and has produced Olympic medalist in rowing, boxing and athletics.

Ireland and Brazil: a cultural dialogue

Ireland was part of the United Kingdom until 1922. In the 19th century when modern organized sports first emerged in the United Kingdom they quickly spread across the Irish Sea to Ireland. By the 1880s the most popular sport in Ireland was cricket, soccer had found a home amongst the industrial workers of the cities of Belfast, Dublin, Cork and Limerick, while rugby was a game enthusiastically embraced by the socially elite schools on the island. In the 1880s Irish nationalists attempted to resist the spread of British culture into the island. The most prominent form of cultural resistance took place in the arts, with organizations such as the Gaelic league promoting the use of the Irish language, the Abbey theatre spearheading the dissemination of Irish drama, and the broader cultural revival stressing the need for Irish culture in poetry, drama and literature to be embraced so that a distinctive Irish identity was retained in the face on British colonialism.

The GAA was founded on 1 November 1884 when seven men met in the billiard room of Hayes' Commercial Hotel in Thurles, County Tipperary. In the context of the period from the 1870s through to the 1890s the creation of an organised sporting body was not unusual. The Irish Rugby Football Union had been founded in 1879, while the Irish Football Association followed a year later in 1880. The Irish Golfing Union was formed in 1891, and the Irish Hockey Union came into being in 1893. The second half of the nineteenth century was the era when modern, codified sport became a central feature of society. The GAA was established to promote and administer its games, namely Gaelic football and hurling and, until the 1920s, track and field athletics.

The GAA was not however a straightforward sporting body. The two driving forces in establishing the Association were Michael Cusack and Maurice Davin, both accomplished sportsmen. They tied the creation of the GAA to two ideas that were otherwise absent from the dominant sporting forms of the day. First, they argued that the GAA should cater for men 'born into no other inheritance other than an everlasting round of labour.' This was important as many of the sports that had arrived in Ireland from Britain were dominated by the upper and middle classes. The GAA would serve the working and labouring men of rural Ireland, and those outside of the metropolitan centre.

Hockey match between Ireland and England, in the women's league
Photo: Flickr/Howard Stanbury

Second, the GAA would resist the spread of foreign games (those British sports of soccer, rugby, hockey and cricket). This rejection of foreign games tied the GAA to the spirit of the Irish cultural revival and would mean that the Association would become one of the most important expressions of Irish cultural and national identity on the island of Ireland.

A key factor in the appeal of the GAA was its organisational structure. Rather than forming teams around towns, schools or workplaces, which had been the model in soccer and rugby, the GAA organised itself around the parish and the county. This has always meant that the GAA embraced the local landscape and geography that is understood by all, and which speaks to and embodies and sense of belonging. It has proved an enduring model and into the twenty first century the GAA still rightfully contends that: 'the GAA Club is the bedrock of every Irish community and provides an organised structure from which great community spirit is generated.' Wedded to the GAA's commitment to the amateurism of its games, the Association has, since its foundation, overseen the emergence of a

sense that it builds on local community due to the volunteer ethos that lies behind every club across the island. Now there are over 2,200 GAA clubs in Ireland with upwards of 700,000 members. It has been estimated that 42% of all community volunteering in Ireland takes place within the GAA and that this has a value to the economy of €500 million. Whether as players, at whatever age level, as members, groundkeepers, coaches, jersey washers, caterers or participants in the Association's music and culture programmes, the members of the GAA (and its female equivalents in the Camogie Association and Ladies Gaelic Football Association) define what it is to be a Gael.

In the years that followed Irish independence the GAA went from strength to strength across the island. Not only was it a way of individuals and communities identifying themselves as Irish, but the appeal of its annual competitions at county and club level grew significantly. Helped by ever increasing levels of media coverage following the All-Ireland competitions in football and hurling became a staple of the Irish summer. In 1961 the record was set for the biggest crowd in Croke Park with 90,556 attending the football final between Down and Offaly. The following year the finals in football and hurling were shown live on television for the first time which led to increased levels of interest in the games. Although Cavan had become the first Ulster County to win a football All-Ireland title in 1933, it was Down, in 1960, that become the first team from Northern Ireland to triumph by beating Kerry 2-10 to 0-8. The Down victory was an historic moment. Peter Mackem wrote in 2020 that 'the crossing of the Border with the Sam Maguire cup represented a genuine passing over, a coming of age, the entry of a new age of heroes… There had been no homecoming like it in the history of the GAA in terms of crowds and excitement.'

In 2024 the All-Ireland Gaelic football final was attended by a crowd of 82,300 and watched on television by 1 million people or a 76% share of the total television audience. The same figures were attained by the All-Ireland hurling final that year. In the women's games of football and camogie growth has been rapid, in terms of participation and spectator interest since 2000. In 2024 the women's

RA GAA match.
Photo: Flickr/Howard Stanbury

football final was attended by 30,340 and the women's camogie final by 27,811. A key difference between the game of the GAA and those of the other sporting codes is that the GAA has been, since its inception, a strictly amateur organisation. As a result, the GAA can invest what monies would have been paid to professional players into the grass roots of the game. This means that the GAA has, across the island, some of the finest and most up to date sports facilities of any of the Irish sports.

If the games of the GAA are the most popular in Ireland, soccer and rugby offer up an annual domestic season of a professional game, and also exist on the international stage. Soccer spread rapidly across Ireland in the late nineteenth century and was particularly popular in urban and industrial areas. Between 1919 and 1921 a war was fought in Ireland between the forces of Irish nationalism and those of the British state. The result was the partition of Ireland. The small northern corner of the island remained British and labelled Northern Ireland, whereas the remainder became independent and would eventually become known as the Irish Republic. When the partition of the island happened soccer also split. As a result, there are two professional leagues on the island. In Northern Ireland the twelve team Irish Premiership and in the

Finn Harps vs. Dundalk, Irish Premiership
Photo: Finn Harps/Press Release

Republic the ten team League of Ireland Premier Division. Both leagues are enthusiastically supported by crowds, by comparison with other European leagues are low. The average crowd in the Northern Irish league was 1,523 in the 2024/5 season and in the Republic was 3,940. One of the problems facing professional soccer on the island is that it is so close to the major leagues of Scotland and England, and many Irish people would follow those leagues through the media rather than support their local team. There is also a talent drain as a player who signs for a team in the fourth tier of the English league would earn an average of €175,000 per year whereas a player remaining in the Irish leagues would earn only €41,000 per year. As a result, spectators who watch the Irish leagues know that all the most talented players are absent as they have moved to play in England. Soccer does, unlike Gaelic games, have an international outlet. Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic have been members of FIFA, the world governing body of soccer, since the 1920s. International tournaments such as the World Cup or the European Championships allow the Irish teams to compete at the top level. Northern Ireland qualified for the World Cup finals in 1958, 1982 and 1986 and for the finals of

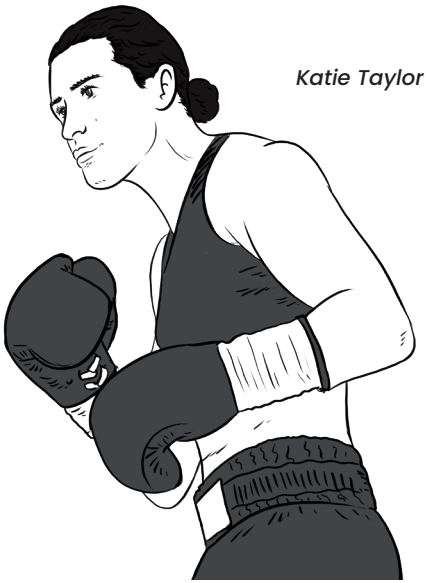
David O'Leary, from the Irish national team at the 1990 World Cup

the European Championships in 2016. The Irish Republic has qualified for the World Cup finals in 1990, 1994 and 2002 and for the finals of the European Championship in 1988, 2012 and 2016. In 2028 the Irish Republic will act as co-host for the European Championship with the United Kingdom and four games will be played in Dublin. The Irish women's international soccer team played its first game in 1973 and in 2023 qualified for its first major tournament and competed at that year's women's World Cup in Australia and New Zealand.

Rugby was a game that came to Ireland from England in the mid-nineteenth century and the first club, the Dublin University Football Club was established in 1855. The game has mainly been the preserve of elite schools with particular concentrations in Belfast, Cork and Dublin. Rugby was an amateur game until the 1990s and the main focus was on localised club fixtures and the Irish national team in the Home Nations tournament (an annual tournament in which Ireland, England, France, Scotland and Wales competed and, since 2000, also Italy). In this competition Ireland has secured the title four times, most recently in 2024. Ireland has qualified for every Rugby World Cup that has been played since 1987 and although strongly favoured at times has never progressed

beyond the quarter finals. Domestically the game of rugby is based around four professional teams which are located in the four Irish provinces. Ireland has been one of the most successful nations in European rugby since it professionalised and Irish clubs have, since 1995, won the continental title seven times.

The island of Ireland supports an impressive sporting infrastructure which has developed since the mid-nineteenth century. There are the indigenous games of the GAA, and the more globalised professional games of soccer and rugby, with Ireland being one of the most powerful teams in the latter sport. In addition to these team sports Ireland has produced world beating athletes in sports such as golf through Rory McIlroy and women's boxing in the form of Katie Taylor. In other sports, such as horse racing, Ireland is a significant global power, and it is renowned for its blood stock and breeding. In 2024 the horse racing industry was worth €2.4 billion to the Irish economy. Across the world many countries may claim to be sport obsessed but many of these claims relate to a single sport. In Ireland the range and depth of different sports that attract the attention and passion of the people is impressive as is the sporting success achieved by a small island with a limited population.



Katie Taylor

5. SCIENCE

Cynthia Longfield: An Irish Insect Hunter in Latin America

Angela Byrne

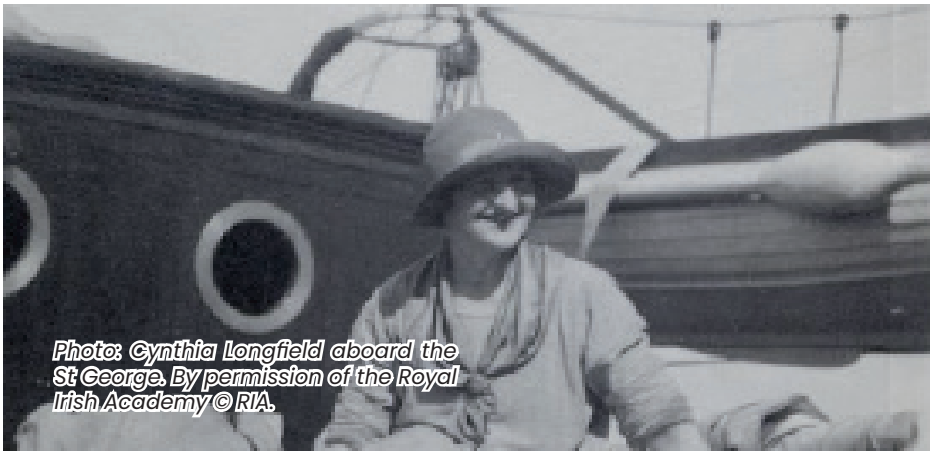


Photo: Cynthia Longfield aboard the St George. By permission of the Royal Irish Academy © RIA.

Imagine you are a global expert on a subject. Imagine you have read all the most important books and travelled thousands of kilometres by sea, on horseback, and on foot as a researcher. Imagine you have trained and worked alongside some of the most experienced scientists in your field and gained their respect. Now imagine that for the next thirty years, you must work for free because of your gender.

That's what happened to Cynthia Longfield, who became one of the world's leading experts on Odonata (dragonflies and damselflies) after making three expeditions to Latin America and the South Pacific in the 1920s.

Born in London in 1896 to Anglo-Irish parents, Cynthia spent much of her childhood at her family's ancestral home at Castle Mary, Co. Cork, Ireland. She was educated at home and was influenced by

her grandmother's love of nature. As a young girl, she loved being outdoors, and finding insects, plants and animals in the fields around the family estate; she frightened her sister by bringing a frog into their bedroom to keep as a pet.

Irish and British women of Cynthia's generation grew up at a time of both social change and ongoing struggle. Women aged over thirty and in possession of a certain amount of property won the right to vote in Britain and Ireland in 1918; in 1922 the newly independent Irish state extended this right to all men and women aged over the age of twenty-one. From the late nineteenth century, British and Irish women slowly gained access to higher education and professions from which they had previously been excluded, like medicine and law. Many women spent the First World War volunteering in roles that they would not normally have access to. Cynthia worked as a driver with the Royal Army Service Corps and worked in an aeroplane factory; her sister Norah worked with the Voluntary Aid Detachment. These

Women campaigning for women's suffrage in 1918
Credit: Eolas Magazine

women emerged from the war with ambition, having glimpsed the opportunities and personal enrichment available in the world of work.

Cynthia's love of the natural world blossomed in December 1921, when she was twenty-five years old. She joined a group of friends on a four-month tour of Latin America, taking in Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Bolivia, Peru, Panama, Jamaica and Cuba. Such a journey was unthinkable and out of reach for the vast majority of women globally. Cynthia was fortunate to come from a wealthy family who were willing to provide her with financial and moral support. This tour was a defining moment in her life and career. Experiencing a world of insects and plants she had never seen before, she found her passion. When she returned to Ireland she began to collect dragonflies, butterflies and moths, and to raise caterpillars. Some of the specimens she collected in Ireland at that time are still part of the collections in Dublin's Natural History Museum.

In 1924 Cynthia returned to South America, this time as one of a team of scientists recreating part of Charles Darwin's ***Beagle*** voyage of 1831–6, during which he formed his theory of evolution. Cynthia successfully applied for the role of assistant entomologist aboard the St George and departed from Dartmouth, England, on 9 April 1924. She was one of three women aboard; there were a stewardess named

Miss Cropp, and the scientist and explorer Lucy Evelyn Cheesman, the first woman curator at London zoo.

The *St George's* seventeen-month, 30,000 mile-long itinerary took in Trinidad and Tobago, Panama, the Galápagos Islands, Marquesas Islands, Tuamotu Islands, Tahiti, Rurutu, Rapa Iti and Rapa Nui (Easter Island). Cynthia kept detailed records of the insects she saw and collected, and the physical risks she and the other scientists took while trying to reach remote and unfamiliar locations.

Photo: Cynthia Longfield aboard the St George. By permission of the Royal Irish Academy © RIA.

Long periods at sea gave her a wonderful opportunity to study astronomy, photography, and marine biology from the professional scientists on board. In just one day of the voyage across the Atlantic, she recorded: 'In the afternoon had a great lesson on marine worms from Dr Crossland, drawing them with the help of the microscope, dissecting parts & mounting them as microscope slides. After dinner M. Collenette & I began learning the stars with the aid of a chart, and made very good progress.' She learned how to handle specimens, how to draw them from the microscope, dissect them and mount them on microscope slides. She even made her own equipment from the materials available aboard ship, such as an 'insect killing bottle' made from a scrap of

the ship's sail. The instrument was such a success that the expedition's eminent entomologist Cyril Collenette asked her to make one for him, too.

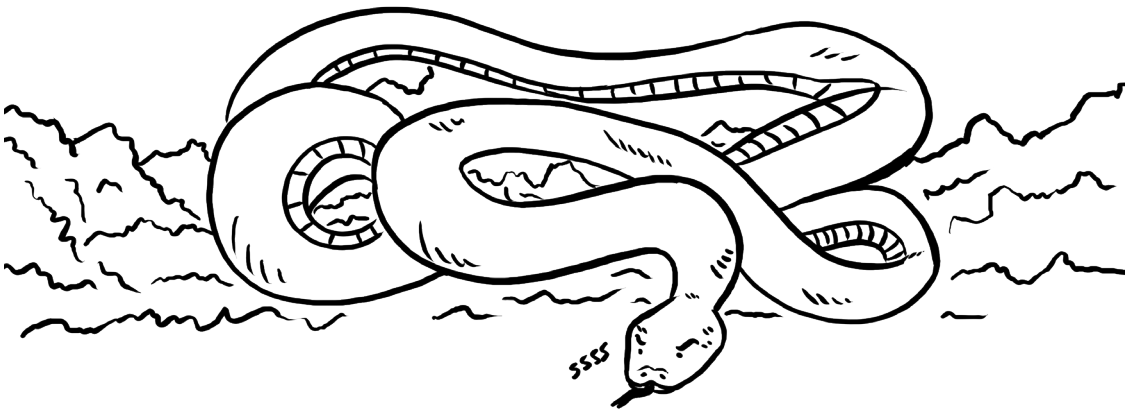
The *St George* expedition was an exciting time in Cynthia's life, and one of personal and professional development. The scientists and crew came up with fun ways of passing the time on the long Atlantic crossing, holding tennis tournaments on deck, forming a ships' band, dancing to gramophone records, and hearing lectures from each other about their previous voyages. Cynthia organised a pirate-themed dinner party, with all guests in fancy dress and themed dishes. She loved life on board the yacht, climbing 24 metres up the mizzen and going out on the bowsprit (the long spar extending from the front of the vessel) to nap in a hanging net. She later recalled: 'The sea voyages never became monotonous to me. There is always so much to be done on a sailing ship […] I was soon as handy in the rigging as many of our amateur seamen. […] I was also kept well occupied as an entomologist – writing up data, diary and notes; and pinning, sorting and classifying the insects.'

Having crossed the Atlantic, as the *St George* first docked in Trinidad, Cynthia saw 'one of the finest sunsets that evening that I have ever seen', followed by a 'glorious starlit night'. The scientists were excited to start their work, and soon encountered hordes of butterflies; Cynthia wrote, 'Never had any of us seen so many different

species at one time, and the excitement was intense'; later, two of her crewmates 'hunted butterflies madly, like a couple of boys, while we laughed ourselves ill over them.' In Panama, Cynthia sought out the 'only patch of original old jungle left', near Gamboa, and was rewarded: 'never have I seen such quantities of glorious butterflies, or so many different kinds, and so many new ones.'

She revelled in close contact with the wildlife, writing in her diary about seeing sealions up close, feeding bread, sardines and cake to the famous Galapagos marine iguana *(Amblyrhynchus cristatus),* and allowed one lizard to catch flies straight from her skirt as she sat near a lagoon. Landing on Isabela Island in the Galápagos, Cynthia wrote: 'we … started taking photos on the rocks at once. It was too marvellous, the amount of animals that just sat & posed for one'; after some magical days there, she described it as 'one, vast, glorious, wild zoo'. She later wrote that it was 'a very paradise to the nature lover' and recalled one of her strongest memories of the expedition:

'I encountered a big boa after dark. I was leading, on our return in the evening from mothing in the jungle, when, on reaching a fallen tree beside the trail, my lamp shone on a beautiful specimen gliding along it. It took no notice of the light, but came steadily on and was only turned when we tickled it in the face with a branch. Immediately it glided up a tree growing near, while we stood breathlessly watching till it vanished in the leaves overhead. The picture of that encounter will remain with me always.'



Like many expeditions in history, the ***St George*** met with difficulties. Instead of camping on the Galápagos for eight days as planned, the entire team was forced to return to Panama due to problems with fuel and food supplies, continuing on to the South Pacific later. When the expedition was finished, they had to survive a full week on salted beef, and had to be rescued by a Panamanian tug as they were becalmed and the yacht had run out of coal. Cynthia wrote, with her characteristic good humour, that although they were 'cleaned out of coal and food', they were 'well stocked with memories of a wonderful voyage and with tangible scientific results to show for it.'

Although Cynthia and her colleagues enjoyed hospitality from local governors and scientists, and experienced some of the glamorous nightlife on offer in the port cities of the Caribbean – enjoying banana splits for the first time in the cafes of Panama – these were only momentary distractions. Her love of nature and science was always to the fore. She made a point of sleeping on the deck of the yacht, except when there was heavy rain. She was always looking out for specimens, not just of the butterflies, moths and dragonflies that she specialised in, but also of mammals, plants, lizards and fish to share with the other scientists. She watched excitedly as caterpillars she collected developed into pupae and butterflies in the ship's lab, and adored Gambo, a tree frog she adopted as her pet. She was not so interested in people, however, and recorded very little information about the people living in the places she visited.

When she returned to London she began working at the British Museum, studying the collections made during the ***St George*** expedition and identifying some new species. She was put in charge of the museum's Odonata collection and quickly gained respect within the scientific community. She was made a member of the Royal Entomological Society and Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society. Despite all of her success, the British Museum never paid her for her work because she was a woman (and probably because she had no formal higher education). She was able to work unpaid because

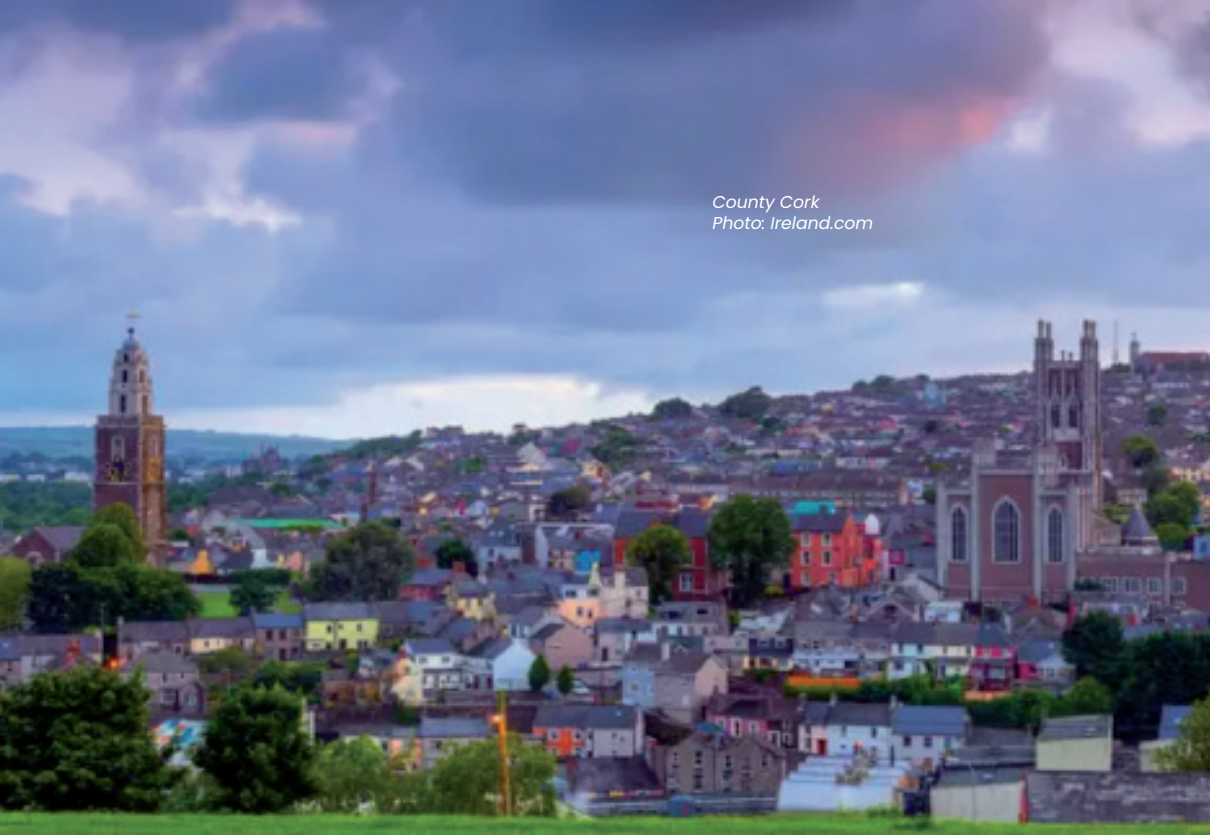
© Royal Irish Academy, photographed with permission of NMI

of her family's wealth; they paid her a small allowance and gave her the use of a house in London.

Cynthia returned to South America on another entomological expedition in 1927, this time as assistant to Cyril Collenette. They fell in love but never had a relationship because he was already married. They travelled around 6,500 km overland, from São Paulo to Campo Grande and into the Mato Grosso plateau in the centre of Brazil – the north-west of which she described as 'practically unexplored territory' – and on to Iguazu Falls. During this expedition Cynthia collected thirty-eight Odonata in the Mato Grosso, one genus and three species of which were new to western science, and twenty-five of which had not previously been recorded in the region. She published her first scientific paper after the 1927 expedition, and in 1932 became the first

woman president of the London Natural History Society and the first woman member of the Council of the Entomological Society. Cynthia made significant contributions to entomology and earned the respect of scientific colleagues worldwide. Despite this, as a woman without a higher education she had little option but to accept her unpaid role at the British Museum.

Cynthia never married, dedicating her life to science instead. She continued to travel after her three Latin American expeditions. In 1929 she and a female friend travelled throughout South East Asia, collecting 529 moths and butterflies and 368 dragonflies, one of which was new to western science and was named in her honour. This was followed by important scientific expeditions to east Africa (1934) and



County Cork
Photo: Ireland.com

South Africa and Zimbabwe (1937); she also visited Egypt (1923) and the Canadian Rockies (1932).

Cynthia retired from the British Museum in 1956 and returned to Co. Cork. She remained active in natural history throughout her long retirement, continuing to travel, participate in scientific conferences and give public talks. She donated her personal papers and library of 500 books to the Royal Irish Academy, Dublin, and part of her collection of Odonata to the Natural History Museum, Dublin. Over 200 of her non-Irish Odonata specimens are in the Natural History Museum in London.

In terms of Ireland's historical links with Latin America – a story traditionally dominated by military men and revolutionaries – Cynthia is unique. Her three expeditions to Latin America transformed her into a scientist – one with no formal education but who had studied in the field, honing her skills alongside some of the leading entomologists of the time. Travel for her was not about adventure; she believed a

successful expedition should feature little drama and yield many scientific specimens. She chased dragonflies, damselflies, butterflies and moths around the world for the sake of her collections. Passionate, practical and fearless, her determination to devote her life to natural history led her to blaze new trails on five continents for women and for science.

Suggested activities

- *Imagine you are Cynthia and you have just arrived in Trinidad after crossing the Atlantic. Write an Instagram post about your experiences and impressions.*
- *You have been asked to design a monument to commemorate Cynthia and her work. What would it look like and what symbolism would you use to convey her contributions to science?*
- *Cynthia has just completed her expedition in the Mato Grosso. Write her diary entry for that day.*

Further Reading

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CONTRIBUTORS

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The W. B. Yeats Chair in Irish Studies was established at the University of São Paulo in 2009 to consolidate cooperation between the Irish Embassy in Brazil and the School of Philosophy, Letters and Human Sciences at USP, focusing on interdisciplinary research, teaching and dissemination of Irish literature and its cultural heritage in Brazil. This publication is aimed at young adults interested in Irish culture.

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Ireland and Brazil: a cultural dialogue is the result of a collaborative project between the Alliance of Chairs of Irish Studies in Latin America, based at the National University of La Pampa (UNLPam), Argentina, the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) and the University of São Paulo (USP). The volume opens with an account of Irish artist Rita Duffy's trip to the three countries as part of the LAC Guest Professor Programme of the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs. She describes her sensory impressions of nature and the pulsating life of the cities where she engaged in artistic work. Divided into five chapters, the book takes the reader on a journey that highlights the crossing paths of enduring historical connections between Brazil and Ireland by exploring its literature, theatre, cinema, visual arts and culture, as well as tackling topics such as sports and scientific contributions.

Ireland and Mexico: A Cultural Dialogue is a volume that brings together chronicles and articles concerning the long-standing and deeply complex cultural relationship between Ireland and Mexico. Diverse viewpoints from artists and experts converge in these pages to offer, with briskness and insight, a journey through the paths our two nations have travelled over several centuries of shared history.

Ireland and Argentina: A Cultural Dialogue introduces a variety of voices and topics: literature and arts, history, politics, science, education and sports, as a steppingstone for those interested in learning about the ongoing relationships between Ireland and Argentina along centuries of intermingled histories.

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